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'THE APOSTLES' CREED.

III. Its Material Structure or Organism.

THE articles of the Creed, in its full form, gather themselves up, in the first place, into three parts; the first treating, as our Catechism has it, of God the Father and our creation; the second of God, the Son, and our redemption; the third of God, the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification. Christianity rests throughout on the mystery of the Ever Blessed Trinity, as revealed for the apprehension of faith through the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In this way, however, the three parts of the Creed now mentioned, fall back ultimately upon a single proposition, affirming the fact of the revelation thus made by Christ. The whole Christian faith, as we have had occasion to say before, finds its primary central utterance in the confession of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This accordingly must be taken as the foundation article of the Creed, on which its whole subsequent structure is to be regarded as resting from the beginning. This does not imply, of course, that Christ is in any way the ground or source of the Trinity itself, but only that the being and presence of God under this form come by him to an

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actual revelation in the world. He underlies in this way the entire mystery of the new creation, as it is in the process of being brought to pass through the Church; which is said accordingly to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

This confession of Peter is well suited to exemplify the true conception of the Creed, as it has been already represented and explained. It is no mere opinion, borrowed from others or the product of private reflection, to which utterance is thus solemnly given. It is the conviction of faith, as immediately exercised upon the living person of the Redeemer himself. Others might think him to be Elias, or Jeremias, or some other of the ancient prophets, but Peter *knew* him to be more than all this; the revelation of his higher nature, his immediate union with God, had made itself felt in the inmost soul of the disciple as a part of his own life; and so he was prepared to exclaim in the language, not of speculation, but of lively heart-felt creed, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* That the confession carried in it this high character, we are expressly assured by our Saviour himself. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona," we hear him saying; "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

The confession utters, in the most immediate and direct way, the fact of Christianity, the new order of life it has brought into the world, as apprehended under its most general character in the person of Christ. The object so apprehended by faith, and thus at once brought to utterance, is no doctrine or report simply concerning Christ, but the glorious reality of the incarnation itself, as exhibited in him under a historical and enduring form. Christianity resolves itself ultimately into this mystery. It has its principle and root in Christ's person. So are we taught most clearly and fully, in the New Testament. The Word reveals itself in him, not by outward oracle or prophecy, but by becoming *flesh*; he is the living comprehension of the truth he proclaims, the actual world of grace itself, which he unfolds and makes known. He is the way, the truth, and the life, by whom alone it is possible for any one else to come to the Father. He is the resurrection and the life; not the proclaimer simply of the

doctrine of a future state and the soul's immortality, but the very ground and medium of the whole fact. The new creation which is, at the same time, the end and completion of the old, starts from the mystery of his person, and holds from first to last in the power of the indissoluble union, thus established between earth and heaven, eternity and time. The incarnation is the deepest and most comprehensive fact, in the economy of the world. Jesus Christ authenticates himself, and all truth and reality besides; or rather all truth and reality are such, only by the relation in which they stand to him, as their great centre and last ground. In him are hid thus all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the absolute revelation of God in the world; the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. As all this, he is no object primarily of intellection, but can be apprehended only by faith; and in this form, he constitutes the sum and substance of Christianity, as it lives in the consciousness of the Church and finds its expression in the Creed.

It is easy to see here the difference between the contents of faith as actual, and its contents again as simply potential. Peter's christianity, at the time of this confession, fell far short of the sense he had of the new creation in Christ Jesus after the day of Pentecost. It included no apprehension of Christ's sufferings and death, of his resurrection and ascension, or of his glorious mediatorial kingdom. It brought with it no knowledge of the Holy Ghost as he works in the Church, no knowledge of the Church itself, or of its cardinal attributes, no distinct sense of the glorious prerogatives and privileges comprehended in its communion. We have no right to suppose, that the mystery, even of the holy Trinity, or the doctrine of our Saviour's true and proper divinity, as afterwards defined, came clearly into Peter's view, when he uttered his wonderful confession. It would have been hard for him probably, to say, what view he had precisely of Christ's person, or what exactly he expected from his life. He was simply overwhelmed with the felt power of God's presence, as it broke upon him, under a form transcending all other revelations, in the "glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And yet his faith, in this form

of primitive and undivided simplicity, was, in its own nature, universal and complete. In its apprehension of Christ, as a living reality, it embraced in truth the entire meaning and power of Christ, as set forth afterwards in the full Creed. All its articles were there, though still to a great extent only under a latent or potential form. As the new creation grows forth actually from the mystery of Christ's person, being from first to last the evolution or development simply of capabilities, relations and powers, that are treasured up in him from the beginning; so the sense of what Christ is as the incarnate Word, when it enters the soul by faith, however circumscribed the horizon of its sight may be at the first, brings with it surely, in the end, by proper culture, all that the full idea of Christianity requires. The mere notion of Christ, or an abstract thought made to stand for him in the Unitarian sense cannot, of course, do this; but it is the very character of faith, as distinguished from all fancy of opinion, that it is called into exercise and determined in the nature of its action, by the supernatural object from which it is filled, as form, with its proper contents. As the *real* apprehension of Christ thus, it can embrace him only as he actually is, from the beginning, and must carry in itself thus an inward necessity of development always under the same form and no other. Of all this we are indirectly assured, by the high honor put on Peter's confession when it was first spoken. This stands not simply in the marvellous and sublime benediction which was pronounced upon his faith, considered as his own, but still more in the proclamation made of its value and power for the future Church. "Thou art *Peter*"—now, indeed, first worthy in full of thine own name—"and on this *rock*," (the living Creed here incorporated with thy life,) "I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* Narrow as the foundation

* Nothing can well be more miserable in its way, than the shifts which have been resorted to here to wrest this great passage out of the hands of the Romanists. Some turn it into a sort of pun or ambiguous play on Peter's name, in which Christ *pointed* to his own person, as he spake, to show the true sense of his riddle. Others make the doctrine avowed in Peter's confession, to be the rock on which the Church is built. All in full disregard of the context, as well as of the special stirring solemnity of the whole

might seem to some, this single article of the incarnation, "Christ the Son of the living God," really embraced by faith, bears up in the end the entire superstructure of Christianity. All Christian theology, as well as all Christian life, starts here, and flows forward from this as its all comprehending source. Here, as we have seen, the outward history of the Creed commences; and here also we find the power, from which is generated its entire structure, inwardly considered. This article, in the form of *creed*, or as made to be actually present in the life of the world by faith, is, in very truth, the ROCK, on which rests the Church, and that may be said to support the new heavens and the new earth themselves, through this as "the pillar and ground of the truth."

Out of this primary article grows, in the first place, generally, the faith of the holy *Trinity*; as it comes before us, for instance, in the formula of baptism: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." So we have it also in the apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." This threefold view of the divine nature, proceeds from the apprehension of Christ, as the Son of the living God. This does not mean, of course, that the fact of the Trinity commences with the incarnation; the

occasion as presented in the evangelical narrative. It is, indeed, a contradiction, against which all religion revolts, to found the Church, in the Roman sense, on the person of Peter separately considered; but neither can it be said to rest on Christ, or on the thought and confession of his name, in any like outward and separate view. The idea of the *Church* requires the flowing together of our common human existence and the higher life revealed in Christ. So long as they stand apart, the new creation must be without effect in the world. It holds altogether in the mystery, by which, through the capacity of faith on one side and the wonderful power of the Holy Ghost on the other, the fallen weak nature of man is so linked with the very life of Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," as to become one with it in a living way. This fact it is, the passing over of Christ's life into the life of the world, the comprehension of the last in the sense of the first, which forms the soul of Peter's confession; and on this living ground, of a truth, as it was now laid in him and his fellow-apostles, the Church, which binds earth and heaven together, was to be built to the end of time.

filiation of the Son, and the procession of the Holy Ghost, as they hold in the being of God himself, are from eternity. Neither does it mean, however, simply, that the doctrine of the holy Trinity has been published by Christ more clearly than before. We meet with no such outward proclamation, in his ministry and word. Some have objected to the doctrine on this very ground, that being so mysterious, and so fundamental as the Church pretends to her whole constitution, so little stress is laid upon it, in the way of clear categorical statement, in the New Testament. And there must be allowed to be no small force in the objection, if the revelation of christianity be taken, as it often is taken, to stand primarily in the form of word or thought for the understanding. It only shows, however, in truth, that such is not its original and fundamental form. It is not primarily a doctrine spoken by Christ, but a fact comprehended in his person; which as such, accordingly, is to be apprehended and appropriated by the world in the way of creed, before it can enter truly into its intelligence or outward life. Christ then, is neither the creator of the Trinity, nor simply its proclaimer; but the form of its explication in the economy of time, the medium by which it manifests itself for faith, and so for knowledge, in the consciousness of the world. The economical Trinity, as it is sometimes styled, in distinction from its immanent character, the Trinity in its relations to man, as it goes forth from eternity into time, for the accomplishment of our salvation—the only form in which the mystery can be said at all to have for us any *revelation*—comes fully into view only and wholly by Christ. There are indeed, adumbrations of the idea, what may be called a spiritual *nisus* towards it in the depths of the human spirit, in the religion and philosophy even of the heathen world; and still clearer intimations of it are to be found in the revelation of the Old Testament, like streaks of light in advance of the rising day; just as in all respects christianity completes the sense of our universal life, by which, at the same time, thus its advent is gloriously harbingered from the beginning. But still the absolute and proper revelation of the Trinity, is brought to pass at last only in the person of Christ, and by the mystery of the incarnation. So it is expressly affirmed in the New Testament.

He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person: No man hath seen the Father, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath *revealed* him: No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall *reveal* him. God had manifested himself to a certain extent, came forth in some measure from the awful solitude of his own absolute being, in the work of creation, and in the course of history as it stood before Christ came. But all this fell short immeasurably of the self-manifestation which took place in the *act* of the incarnation, when the everlasting Word became flesh, and linked itself into one life with the life of the world itself, as raised to its highest power in man. God came forth in this act, manifested himself, laid himself open in the form of life to the view of faith, as never in all revelations before. Only so was it possible for the mystery of the Trinity to bring itself out clearly in the apprehension of the world; and in no other form, than as thus apprehended, can the doctrine be of any true value or force. Never was there a greater mistake, than to conceive of it as primarily an abstract theory or speculation. It is the most practical of all truths; for it lies, in the form of *fact*, at the ground of the whole christian revelation, and is in truth the very form in which this revelation makes itself real, through faith, in the consciousness of the Church. This precisely is the mystery that faith finds in Christ. It lies at the foundation of christianity. To be baptized into Christ, is to be baptized into the holy Trinity. The faith and apprehension of God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, lie involved from the beginning, in Peter's confession—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It is only by this view of the revelation of the Trinity, that we can at all maintain the credit of the doctrine as a part of christianity. Infidels and Unitarians are able easily enough to show, not merely that no pains are taken to affirm it with clear doctrinal precision, (after the fashion of our catechisms,) in the New Testament; but also that the doctrinal statements of the early Church in regard to it, continue to be for a long time very indefinite and insecure. We do not find the distinction of persons in the Godhead, and their several relations, clearly and fully appre-

hended from the beginning, in the form under which all was afterwards defined and settled. This has often embarrassed those whose conception of christianity requires it to start in the form of doctrine rather than in the form of life. With any right view, however, of its true nature in this respect, the difficulty is made at once to vanish. The Trinity unfolds itself, discloses itself as a fact, only in the historical process of the incarnation, the mystery revealed by Christ's person; and in this way, of course, only as this mystery is made to pass over truly, through faith, into the living constitution of the world, so as to underlie it and take possession of it as the power of a new creation. Thus revealed and apprehended, the entire fact might be in the life of the Church, long before it could be brought to any satisfactory representation in the form of thought. So we have it proclaimed from the start, in the Apostles' Creed. The Trinity is there, not indeed in full theological statement as afterwards settled, but still in the overwhelming sense of its necessary substance, as it looks out upon the world through the glorious fact of the incarnation, and completes its presence in the Church, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The new creation stands throughout in the mystery of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, historically brought to light by the union of the everlasting Word with our fallen flesh.

The Creed is the utterance of this mystery as it unfolds itself by Christ, in the consciousness of the christian world. All forms a single revelation, which takes effect, however, in the way of magnificent process, starting in the bosom of the Father, and completing itself finally in the full glories of the new earth and new heavens. The end accordingly, grows out of the beginning, and is comprehended in it from the start. The new creation commences with the Father, enters the world through the incarnation of the Son, and runs its course in the world's life subsequently, by the Holy Ghost constantly present and always active in the Church. Such is the order in which the three grand divisions of the Creed come into view; each forming a complete whole within itself, with more or less full utterance of its leading landmark facts; while the entire contents of the second are apprehended, as flowing in the way of derivation from

the first; and then again, as coming to their full issue and last sense, only in the broad sea of glory which is thrown open by the third. In the case of each division, moreover, the characteristic points of fact which it is made to include, whether more or less full, follow each other to a certain extent, in the same way. They are not properly so many items of truth, separately propounded for our reception, as they are notes and characters rather that mark the onward progress of the great universal fact to which they belong, and by which they have place. The Creed rolls thus, like a lofty anthem, with continuous stream of music, rising and swelling throughout on the same key, from its commencement to its close. We may style it a panoramic view of the "pure river of water of life," the moving process of the world's redemption, as it starts from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and flows forward by successive stages, with paradise on its banks, to the region of light and immortality in which finally the Holy Catholic Church shall become forever complete.

All begins in "God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This is not to be taken, of course, as an article here, of mere natural religion, which may be supposed to go before the revelation of Christianity and to make room for its presence. God does, indeed, reveal himself through nature, as the absolute ground of the universe. But Christianity does not simply take up this fact as thus previously at hand, and then go on to add to it new truths of its own. It goes beyond all previous revelations, and especially all merely natural religion, not only extensively in the amount of what it makes known, but also *intensively* in the depth and power of its apprehension. God in Christ is indeed the God of nature; but with such new self-manifestation of his interior life, as makes him to be, even in this last relation, a wholly different being for our faith, from all he seemed to be before. The revelation of nature is shadowy and superficial, as compared with that which has place in Christ; and it is only by means of this finally, that it comes to its own full significance and sense. Christianity then allows no simply natural religion in its bosom. "When that which is perfect, is come, then that which is in part shall be done away;" the relative, as such, enters not into the composi-

tion of the absolute. So the Creed embraces God, even in his character of Creator, as he has now come to be known, not simply in nature, but in the person of his Son Jesus Christ; "by whom also he made the worlds;" and through whom alone, "in these last days," the full sense of that first creation is fairly brought to light. He is recognized thus, and worshipped, not merely as the author of nature, or as the supreme being, in the cold language of rationalistic deism, but as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who is disclosed to the vision of faith, *through him*, as *our* Father also, the fountain and source of the new glorious creation revealed in his person. In this way it is, we are encouraged to approach him in the Lord's Prayer; and in no other view can he be the object of a truly Christian faith. It is through the apprehension of Christ, as the Son of the living God, in the sense of Peter's confession, that the Creed throws us back to this first article as its own everlasting ground and foundation. "He that hath seen *ME*," our Saviour himself says, "*hath seen the Father.*"

In the second section of the Creed, this sublime revelation is represented as going forward, to the actual apprehension of faith, in the historical person of our Blessed Redeemer, Jesus of Nazareth, from the point of his miraculous conception and birth, onward to the completion of his glory finally at the right hand of God in heaven; where he reigns head over all things to the Church, and from whence he shall come at the last day to judge the quick and the dead. "The Life was manifested," says St. John, "and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us." The mystery of the incarnation is not strictly a fact, which is to be considered as complete all at once from the point where it commences. In any such view, it would be more magical than real. Our human life does not hold at all under any such stationary character; but is, in its very conception, a fact that accomplishes itself only in the way of historical process and growth. To become human at all then, to enter truly into the stream of man's life, it was indispensable that the Son of God should take humanity upon him, not suddenly and abruptly, but with progressive order, agreeably to the general law of

all existence in time. His life as human, moreover, could not become absolutely complete, so as to display the full sense and meaning of its union with the divine nature, until it was brought, in the way of regular historical progress, to surmount in full the limitations of our present mortal state, thus triumphing over death and him that had the power of death, in the glory of the resurrection. Hence altogether, in the very nature of the case, the stupendous fact of the incarnation, resolves itself into a series or chain of events, a living historical process rather, by which the mystery enters more intimately and deeply always into the drama of the world's life; till finally it becomes complete, and is found to have its perfect work, when "Jesus was glorified," and the windows of heaven were opened thus, (John vii. 39,) for the power of his Spirit to descend in full measure upon the earth. Only under such view, can the faith, which the Creed requires us to exercise in Christ, be considered real and true. Hence the general fact comprised in his person, is drawn out in a succession of historical points, that mark and define its progress from the womb of the Virgin to God's right hand. These, we can see at once, might easily be more or less in number, without affecting the substance of the main article, or the general design with which they are brought forward. As the Creed now stands however, they are wonderfully pertinent and complete; as we shall see presently, when we come to speak more particularly of their significance as articles of faith.

The mystery of the incarnation, as it stands before us in the person of Christ, includes two sides, which must both enter steadily into our faith, to make it complete. We must apprehend, in the first place, the presence of a truly divine life in the fact, the entrance of God into the world as he had not been in it before; in the second place, this life must be admitted under a true human form, and in such relation to the previous constitution of the world, that it shall not violate its order, but be felt rather to fall in with it organically and complete its sense. Thus in Peter's confession, the power of his faith shows itself just in the firm combination of these two views. "The Son of the living God"—a new full manifestation of the divine life—"art thou," the living human Master, whom we follow and serve. This felt

apprehension of the union of the divine and human, the infinite and the historical, in Christ's person, was that precisely which imparted to the faith of the disciple such high value in his Master's eyes.

So the Creed affirms first the full presence of God's life, in the awful fact which is here proclaimed. "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord." This is to be taken in direct continuation of what goes before; and asserts, in fact, that our faith in God the Father himself is conditioned by the real revelation, under which he is made known to us in Christ; as it is said in one place by the Saviour himself: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3); and, again, by the Apostle John: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20). The Creed, in the strongest manner, asserts this identification of Christ with the contents of God's life, so far as this can be an object either of faith or knowledge for men; in full correspondence with what is said in the first chapter of St. John's gospel: "The same Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, and which was God, in the fulness of time became flesh, and tabernacled among us, exhibiting his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Then follows however, at length, the assertion, no less clear and firm, of the true human and historical character of all this revelation, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Son of the living God, who is here embraced as the object of faith, "was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary." So the supernatural in him links itself organically with the existing constitution of the world, and lays the foundation thus within it for a new and higher order of life. The miraculous conception becomes a natural birth, making room and way for the coming of Christ in the flesh. Such a birth implies growth, development, progress in stature and wisdom (Luke ii. 52); and

the life of Christ involves subsequently his full ministry and work. In this way, the Creed might include other dates and facts in his history, such as his baptism, temptation, miracles, &c., and still not suffer any material alteration. It does include all these points in truth, though only in a latent way, and as comprehended in the general fact; while its utterance confines itself to the great and necessary outline simply of the Saviour's history as a whole. In this way, we are carried at once to the close of his life under its earthly form: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; descended into hell." His existence in the world was human throughout, rounded in as a living process from the womb to the grave. As he came into the world by a real birth, notwithstanding the divine sublimity of his nature as the Son of the living God, so he went forth from it at last by a real death. His was no fantastic manhood only, that played itself off on the eyes of men as true, when it was only a Gnostic shadow, or vision, in fact. He suffered under a Roman magistrate, openly, publicly, and with solemn form, and this passion ran out into a most real and full dissolution of body and soul; it was no sleep or swoon, but death; his body was laid in the grave, while his soul went into hades, the intermediate state. This last clause, as we have seen before, was introduced at a comparatively late period. It was, however, virtually a part of the Creed from the beginning; having no other object at last, than to affirm explicitly, what had been affirmed all along by implication, in the assertion of his death and burial. The descent to hades is indispensable to complete the conception of a full obedience to the law of mortality, comprehended in the problem which Christ came to fulfil. Short of this, his death could not be regarded as a historical fact.

The death of Christ, however, as an object of faith, is far more than the termination simply of a common human life. The person, of whom all this holds, is still the Son of the living God, the everlasting Word in union with our weak mortal flesh. The *reality* of this conception requires then, that the higher nature here at work should not allow itself to be overwhelmed and crushed in the process, but so enter into it, as to assert in the end its own superiority in the way of universal triumph over its

terrific power. The sufferings and death of the Son of God involve thus necessarily, for faith, the idea of a *conflict*, the issue of which is a full victory over death and the grave, as well as over the power of sin from which they come. It was not possible, we are told, that he should be holden of death (Acts ii. 24); that he should sink to rise no more, in the catastrophe, which brought his mortal state to a close. This *impossibility* is perceived and felt by faith, even while it acknowledges his passion; the sufferings of the Son of God are proclaimed, as the very form in which he destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and thus brought in righteousness and immortality for all that believe in his name. So it follows immediately: "The third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father, Almighty." All in continuation simply of the living process, on which he entered at his birth. The true universal significance of his life, as including in itself a deeper power than the law of mortality he came to abolish, now comes into view. The nature he had assumed, is made to surmount the limitations of its first state, and rises triumphant to the skies. Hades is shorn of its strength, the grave resigns its prey; he that descended into the lower parts of the earth (Eph. iv. 9, 10), is the *same* that is seen to ascend up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. The old order of the world, in his case, is brought to an end; he leads captivity captive; man, in his person, finds himself exalted finally to his proper supremacy over the whole inferior creation. All things are placed under his dominion, and he is head over all things, to the Church. In this character, he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet, and the whole world subdued into harmony with the order of the new creation. His mediatorial government extends, by the very nature of the case, from the hour of his exaltation onward to the end of time; and finds its necessary conclusion in the general judgment. So all is comprehended here again, as in the case of our Saviour's first state, within the extremes that bound the entire stadium on either side; and, with a single stroke, we have this part of the Creed complete: "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

In all this representation of the Saviour's personal history, the outline of his life as it reaches from his introduction into the world on to the winding up of his mediatorial reign, we have, after all, it must be borne in mind, the evolution simply of the one single fact in which Christianity begins, as proclaimed in Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The several specifications employed to set it forth, are not to be taken as so many independent propositions, asserted on separate evidence, and brought together in the way of collective sum; they might be more, or they might be less; but in any case they are to be taken as bound together in the constitution of one and the same great object of faith, out of which, in the end flows all their title to a place in the Creed. For instance, it would be a mistake to suppose that the miraculous conception, or the descent to hades, or the resurrection and ascension into heaven, are exhibited as articles of christian belief, which we may be expected to receive in the first place on their own proofs separately considered, and then lay away under this form in the general repository of our faith; as though the Creed were the accumulation merely of such theological conclusions and results. The only *ground* of all Christian faith, we have seen already, to be the person of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. To suppose now, however, that the miraculous conception, or the resurrection, might be made certain by themselves, in the first place, on proofs lying wholly out of Christ, is to contradict this conception in full. There is no such contradiction in the Creed. Every topic affirmed here of Christ's history, is an article of *faith* in the high christian sense; a reality that belongs not to the world of nature and sense as such, but to the new creation, in which heaven and earth are brought supernaturally together by the mystery of the incarnation; no outward witnesses and no common human reasons, impart to it its ultimate credibility; this lies in the relation in which it is felt to stand to the fact of the Saviour's person itself. The grand argument after all, for the great distinctive *memorabilia* of Christ's theanthropic life, and that without which no evidence besides could make them certain, is comprehended in his own presence. The first condition of all knowledge here, is an entrance, by faith, into the central fact of the Gospel, as

we have it presented to us in the living and moving form of the Divine Word itself, incarnate for us men, and our salvation, in the Virgin's Son. Not as we stand on the threshold merely of this sublime and magnificent temple, but only as we pass into the awful bosom of the sanctuary itself, may we ever expect to apprehend as they are the forms and proportions of its true interior structure. Only in proportion as my faith is first overwhelmed with the sense of Christ's real divine majesty, as the Son of the living God made flesh, can I be brought to admit with firm faith, on any evidence, the astounding mystery of his birth, or the no less astounding mystery of his resurrection. The whole lies *beyond* nature, in the sphere of a new order of life which is revealed in Christ and nowhere else; how then should it be apprehensible at all, or creditable, under any other form of observation? But, on the other hand, let the sense of Christ's majesty so overwhelm the mind, in the first place, and these mysteries, astounding as they are, can no longer be repelled; they are felt to be indispensable to the conception of his person. *Such* a person could not come into the world by the ordinary course of nature; and equal violence is involved in the imagination of his yielding finally, like other men, to the power of the grave. The man Christ, as he stands before us there through the medium of Peter's faith, is felt to be a fact that transcends the whole course of nature, even while it discloses itself historically in its bosom; it is the presence and power of a higher supernatural order of existence in union with nature, which cannot, as such, be included and bound within its economy as it stood before, either first or last. Faith in Christ, as the revelation of a divine life in the world, cannot stand at all in connection with the supposition, either of his being born, or of his remaining in the grave, like other men. In any such view, it would cease to be this faith altogether, and the Christ of the Creed would no longer exist, except as a phantom for the imagination.

Thus it is that all the points of this historical confession, however some of them might seem to be accessible to our knowledge at least, to some extent in a different way, yet in the true force and spirit of the Creed, are to be taken as supernatural truths, which can be rightly apprehended and uttered only by faith in

full communication throughout with the grand primary fact to which they belong and from which they spring. Even the passion of the Saviour, his sufferings under Pontius Pilate, his bloody death and burial, are vastly more in this case than topics of natural intelligence; the apprehension of them, as entering into the life of Christ, the Son of the living God, lifts them at once into the supernatural sphere in which that life holds; and it requires accordingly the same sort of faith to say, "*Christ died,*" which we need to add immediately, "*and rose again.*" The fact of the resurrection witnessed by *sense*, that is as a mere phenomenon in the world of nature, would not be its truth as asserted in the Creed; just as little as the sight and acknowledgment of Christ's miracles, in the days of his flesh, amounted, with the Scribes and Pharisees, to any true apprehension of his divine glory. The idea of Christ is not of itself his history; but it is only through the power of it, as actually at hand, for faith, that his history becomes intelligible and enters also into our creed under a corresponding mode of existence.

The great fact of the Creed, the revelation of the Ever Blessed Trinity in the mystery of redemption, completes itself finally in the Holy Ghost, through whose presence in the world the saving power of Christ's life is carried over to his people. A new region of glory is thus thrown open to the vision of faith, including as before, a flowing process, whose commencement is here joined at once with its magnificent end. The whole however, as already intimated, is but a continuation of the one stupendous mystery that goes before. Our faith in the Holy Ghost is not drawn from some other quarter, and then made to range itself as a separate and independent belief, along with our faith in the Incarnation; it grows forth from this as its necessary and only sufficient ground; it can have no value, no reality in truth, save as it is made to enter our minds in this way. So too our faith in Christ completes itself legitimately only in the faith of the Holy Ghost. A true christology, involving, as it must, a living sense of the true universal import of Christ's life, carries in itself a demand for the extension of its power, in some way, over to the race he came to redeem. The river of life which first opens upon our view in his person, must flow over these banks in the end, and become

a sea of glory, filling the whole world. This can be accomplished only through the living activity of the Holy Ghost; whose proper personality and work, accordingly, faith is thus brought to apprehend, as the necessary complement, we may say, of what it has previously apprehended as the presence of God in Christ. We read of God's Spirit as present with a certain kind of action in the world, before Christ came; but it will not do to take this as identical at all with the form of his presence in the world since. We are plainly told, that the Spirit as he now works in the Church, could not be given till Christ was glorified; the mystery of the incarnation must complete its course in his person, before room could be made for the farther revelation of its power in the other form. This accordingly was the great promise for which his disciples were directed to wait, when he left the world; the fulfilment of which too, as we all know, took place on the day of Pentecost, and laid the foundations of the Christian Church. The article, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," has regard altogether to this revelation, the entrance of God's Spirit into the process of the world's life as the Spirit of Jesus Christ, under such form of existence and action as had no place before, and was first rendered possible only by the new creation brought to pass in his person. To accept the doctrine of the Holy Ghost as true on *other* grounds, and under a simply abstract form, can not satisfy at all the sense of the Apostles' Creed. The only faith in the Holy Ghost it knows, is that which is conditioned by faith in the sublime Christology that goes before, and which grows out of this as its cause and ground.

Forth from this divine spring-head now rolls, in conclusion, the full tide of Christianity, as it is found still pouring itself forward, age after age, in the Church. The topics or heads that follow, stand related again to the primary article, much as we have found the several clauses in regard to Christ to be related to the general article of the incarnation. They serve simply to draw out and define graphically the contents of our faith in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is apprehended in the Creed, not as an abstraction or thought merely, but as a fact actually revealing itself in the world; and the form of this revelation expresses itself comprehensively in the "Holy Catholic Church," where

the new creation is exhibited in grand outline, as "the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

The article of the Church, then, of course, is not made co-ordinate in any way with the articles of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We are not to believe *in* the Church, as we are required to believe in God; we believe it simply, as we believe the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting; it is something sure to us, as the form under which the Holy Ghost is apprehended, as historically present and active in the world. So the world itself may be an object of faith, (Heb. xi. 3,) when the revelation of God in it is truly seen and felt. It must be always kept in mind, however, that this involves far more than the knowledge of it by mere sense. The world does not properly beget our faith in God; but it is this faith, rather, which enables us to believe the world, as the true sacrament of his presence. And so the Church also, the new creation in Christ Jesus, notwithstanding the subordinate character now assigned to it, is still altogether an object, not of sense and natural knowledge, but of faith. However accessible it may be under certain aspects to mere outward observation, its actual reality and substance, as affirmed in the Creed, are ever to be acknowledged as something divine, of which no proper assurance can be had in any such outward way. The entire Creed has to do with realities that hold in a world above nature, (though not abstractly disjoined from it,) and that can be apprehended, accordingly, as they are, only by faith. To believe the Church, then, is something far more than to believe the presence of some certain, tangible and visible organization in the world, like the British Parliament, for instance, of which we can take the measure and gauge by direct outward inspection. Such palpability in the case of the Church, even if it were fully at hand, would not of itself bring with it what this article requires; just as little as the *sight* of Christ after his resurrection, might be taken as equivalent to the sense of it by faith. The invisible and supernatural here, as throughout the Creed, must be apprehended as going before the outward, underlying it, and filling it with its true and necessary sense. We rise not from the region of sense here, into the region of spirit; but from the region of

spirit itself, rather, as we have come to be in it already by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, we descend into the region of sense and actual life; and by virtue of the same assurance with which we say: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*, are enabled and urged at the same time to exclaim: *We believe in the Holy Catholic Church*. The revelation of grace and truth which starts in the mystery of the incarnation, the great christological fact here disclosed to the view of faith, runs forward, of itself, into the mystery of the Church. We need no outward precepts and texts here to prop up our belief and make it rational; on this *rock*, the Church is built as a living necessary fact; and if it have no reality for our faith in such form, it is in vain to expect that it can ever be made an object of faith to us truly in any other way.

Thus apprehended in its ideal constitution, as the necessary outbirth of Christ's Mediatorial life, the Church waits for no definition from abroad, but proceeds at once to define itself, in the Creed, as One, Holy, and Catholic; which at once includes also the title Apostolical, as afterwards frequently introduced. These attributes come not from without, hang not at all on men's invention or consent, rest not primarily on any basis of empirical observation or induction. They are the necessary conditions of the *idea*, which is here laid hold of by faith, as something given and made sure through the mystery of Christianity itself. It will not do to cut and square this, with arbitrary violence, into our own shape; we must take it as it stands, and interpret it accordingly. To say that facts forbid such a construction of the Church, is only to say in other words, that the idea of Christianity presented in the Creed is a fiction, and along with this that its view of Christ's person is false; for the one conception flows with inward necessary deduction from the other. From the stand-point of the Creed, the attributes of the Church are just as fixed and certain, in its own sense, as the being which is felt to belong to it as the Body of Christ. It is this relation precisely in which it stands to his person, that fixes and settles its character in all the respects here under consideration. If it be in very truth the comprehension of a new and higher order of life for the world, the fountain of which is the Redeemer himself, it

must require in its own nature unity, sanctity and catholicity. It must be such a positive whole, as owns nothing beyond itself, and can allow no schism within itself. As it is the most perfect form of human life, so it must claim authority also as the most universal. It must be apostolical too, or in other words strictly *historical*, a real continuously active constitution from the time of the Apostles on to the end of the world. All this is implied, for faith, in the lively sense of what is comprehended in Christ's person; as all skepticism or indifference, on the other hand, in regard to these necessary attributes of the Church, is a worm which may be said to lie at last very near to the core of Christianity itself.

The mystical supernatural character of the Church, as now described, is expressed in one word as the "communion of saints." The Creed means not by this, of course, to resolve it into the ordinary fellowship of kindred minds. The object is rather to lift the conception distinctly into a higher sphere. Nothing can be more real than this new order of existence, though the law which underlies it, and the bond that holds it together, be "not of this world" in the ordinary view. Its common universal character is membership in Christ, who is the one everlasting foundation of a life, more real, and deep, and solid, and enduring, than all that belongs to the world besides. To believe the *communion of saints*, as such a supernatural constitution in Christ, historically present in the world, binding all ages of the Church together as a single whole, reaching over into the intermediate state, and destined to break forth at last into the full triumph of the resurrection, amid the glories of the new heavens and the new earth, may well be counted something high and great, and worthy of the place it holds in the Creed. "*Fools* never raise their thoughts so high;" mere flesh and blood can bring us truly to no such revelation.

Within this mystery now of the new creation, is comprehended the process by which individual souls, from age to age, are gathered from ruin and made meet for eternal glory. To a vast deal of our modern thinking, the order observed here by the Creed must appear careless, at least, and ill-advised. It would be led far more naturally to say: I believe in repentance and conversion, then in the communion of saints, and finally, in some sort

of holy catholic church; putting the individual isolated christianity, in order of thought, before that which is general and collective. The early Church, however, had a different way of looking at the matter; and the difference is here very plainly graven upon rock, in this old monumental symbol. The Church is taken to be the Holy Mother, from whose womb, as Calvin has it, we must all be born, and on whose breasts we must all hang, in order that we may grow up unto everlasting life. The general, objective, universal side of Christianity, starting as it does in Christ, although it can never be sundered from individual religion in the Church, must not be viewed simply as the product and consequence of this, but is to be apprehended always by faith rather as the power that truly underlies and supports all its worth. The process of our salvation lies, not beyond the Church and out of it, but directly in its bosom. We have it measured here by its extreme ends, with all intermediate forms of experience quietly included, of course, as parts of one and the same historical fact. This starts in the "remission of sins," and becomes complete finally, with the completion of the Church as a whole, in the "resurrection of the body." The first clause is no doubt one in sense substantially, with the Nicene article, "one baptism for the remission of sins." No one at all familiar with the life of the early Church, or in any way at home in the true genius of the Creed, can hesitate at all or feel much embarrassed, in regard to this point. The religion of the Creed is, throughout, sacramental and churchly, in the right sense of these terms. We may, if we choose, force into it a different meaning, to suit our own different taste; but the meaning of the period from which it springs, is abundantly clear, and we are bound to respect it, at least so far as history is concerned. The Church is here made an object of faith; a new divine economy is regarded as permanently at hand in her constitution; she is the mystical mother of saints; her sacraments convey grace, where the way is open for its reception; the remission of sins, in order to a christian life, comes under God from her hand (Matth. xvi. 19, xviii. 18.); and the act by which the grace is sealed is holy baptism, which it is the duty and privilege of all, accordingly, to embrace with full faith, as carrying in it this divine force. All this was liable to be greatly abused, and, as we very well know, was so

abused in fact. But still, rightly understood, it expresses deep and sacred truth; the force of which *we* also must acknowledge and feel, if we would not forfeit all lot and part in the Creed of the ancient Church.

The whole winds up with "the life everlasting;" which is simply the triumphant issue of the christian process, as it is to reach its conclusion finally in the resurrection. To some, the doctrine of everlasting life appears to carry with it an independent certainty, on other grounds; so far at least as the "immortality of the soul" is concerned, it is felt to be comparatively easy to accept the idea of a future state, on what are supposed to be the merely rational evidences of its reality. But the Creed knows nothing of any such abstract immortality. Its life everlasting is conditioned absolutely, by the resurrection of the body; it stands in the recovery of the man as a whole unity, from the law of sin and death which lies upon him in his present state; and all becomes real, only as a fact comprehended in the new creation which is brought to pass in Jesus Christ. Such plainly too is the view taken of it in the New Testament. The *immortality of the soul*, as it is called, in the common sense of the doctrine, is not taught in the Bible; on the contrary, it is heathenish, and tends to subvert the fundamental idea of Christianity. Life and immortality in the New Testament sense, are "brought to light" by Jesus Christ, as the result of his own mysterious union with our fallen nature, and in this form embrace at once body and soul together. To be in Him, is to have everlasting life, with the certainty of being raised up in virtue of it at the last day. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Thus it is that this article of the Creed as well as all the rest, is an object strictly and truly of *faith*; and this the same faith at last by which we assent to the mystery of Christ's person. To hold it on other grounds is not enough; we *believe* it truly, only when we embrace it as a fact which is felt to have its foundation and necessity in this living revelation, and in this alone.

Practical Reflections.

Such we conceive to be the general scheme and structure of the Creed. It is no such fragmentary, disjointed production, as

it is often imagined to be, by those who have little or no sympathy with its true sense and spirit. Take it as it is in its own constitution; let it be apprehended and estimated, not as a work of outward theological reflection, but as a transcript of what may be styled the intuitional consciousness of christianity itself in its original fundamental form; let the true conception of christianity be at hand as a new life, and not simply a new theory, springing from Christ, and along with this the true conception also of faith as the very power by which it is substantiated and made to be present in the world; and it will be no longer difficult for any one to feel the divine force of the symbol, the grandeur of its idea, the unity and harmony and complete wholeness of its architectural design. It is in all respects single, rotund and full, within the compass of its own orb. It is a majestic tree that grows forth from a single root. It is a grand oratorio of the Messiah, and of the Creation, in which the full harmony of heaven pours itself along, like the sound of many waters, from beginning to end. It is a vast Gothic dome, whose massive symmetry, poised upon a single centre, seems to swim with aërial lightness in a world of its own, piercing at last the very heavens. No work of art could well be more finished and complete. Each part becomes intelligible, nay, as an object of *faith*, becomes real, we may say, only by its inward organic union with the whole; while this, on the other hand, includes and requires all the parts, from the beginning, as essential to its own constitution. Some have thought, that it would be an easy thing to *improve* the Creed, by throwing out some parts of it and adding to it various doctrinal propositions which are now wanting. There is reason to suspect, indeed, as already intimated, that with no small portion of our modern Protestantism, the task would be felt comparatively light, to construct a much better new Creed altogether. All such thinking, however, turns of course, on a radically defective sense of its true nature and design, and betrays besides a most unsafe apprehension of christianity itself; the very last that can deserve to be trusted, with all its imaginary orthodoxy, for the manufacture of any religious creed or confession whatever. The Creed, in its right conception, can admit no such improvement or alteration. There is no room to speak of different creeds as we may speak,

for instance, of different catechisms or church covenants; as though the fact of Christianity might be cast into several totally diverse schemes of thought, and yet remain true to itself in this character. 'To be truly a *Creed* at all, it must be the very movement of the fact itself, as disclosed to the vision of faith. It must be one thus, and not many. There is room, as we have seen, for variations in the filling up of the outline or scheme. This may be more or less full. But there is no room for different outlines or schemes. The Creed, in this respect, is as much one as Christianity itself is one. It determines its own contents, and it determines also its own form. It literally makes itself, and it will allow no man to turn it into any other shape. Whatever else our Christianity may include, in the way of doctrine or practice, it must start under the form here proclaimed, if it is to be at all legitimate and worthy of trust. This, at all events, is Christianity in its most universal character, the glorious fact of the new creation by Christ Jesus, under its broadest and most comprehensive features. Under such view, it is admirably complete; and it must be the wildest extravagance ever to dream of improving it by taking from it, or adding to it, or re-forging it into any new shape.

We close with the following reflections, flowing more or less directly, in the way of corollary or suggestion, from the whole subject:

I. The Creed does not spring from the Bible. This is plain from its history. Its main substance was in use before the New Testament was formed. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," had no such origin. It was produced from the living sense of Christ's presence itself. And so, we may say, the whole Creed which lies involved in that confession, is derived through faith out of the same living ground. It is, of course, in harmony with the Bible; for it has to do immediately with its central revelation, the mystery of the Word made Flesh. It comes not, however, circuitously, in the way of reflection and study, through its pages. The early Church got it not from the Bible, but from the fact of Christianity itself, which must be allowed to be in its own nature older even and deeper than its own record under this form. Strange that there should be any

confusion in regard to what is in itself so palpable and clear. The Bible is not the *principle* of Christianity; nor yet the *rock* on which the Church is built. It never claims this character, and it can be no better than idolatry and superstition to worship it in any such view; as much so as though the same worship were directed towards a crucifix or the Roman mass. The one only principle of Christianity, the true and proper fountain of its being, is the person of Christ; not any written account or notion of his person, but the actual living revelation of it, as a fact in the history of the world. The Church rests immediately on this foundation, and no other. The Bible is of force, only as it proclaims this revelation. In such view, it is of indispensable account for the preservation and advancement of the christian life; it is the divinely constituted rule, by which, through all ages, it must be measured and led. But still it is not this life itself; its relation to it is, after all, that of a condition, rather than that of a ground; and we are bound to see in Christianity always the presence of the Word under another form, as the true substratum at last of all its glorious power in the world. It is a Fact, independently of the Bible and before it, which, as such, has a right to challenge our faith, whether we can show the Bible to be inspired or not. Indeed our ability to show the Bible inspired, must ever turn on our ability to prove in the first place, the reality of the revelation. So in all our systems of divinity, we begin, not with the inspiration of the sacred volume, as though this could be established in any wholly *ab extra* way, but with the truth of Christianity itself; feeling well assured that without this, it must be worse than idle to think of bringing the other question to any satisfactory issue. But what is this else than an acknowledgement that the Bible is not the principle of Christianity, but that this has its being in the world under another form, which is no less divine than the Scriptures themselves. Christianity is not only a written word, but a new creation in the form of life, starting from its founder Jesus Christ. In this last view, it *must* have, if it be what it claims to be, a real historical substance, which we are bound to respect as divine, no less than the Bible itself. There is not merely room thus, but an absolute necessity, for what may be styled a true christian *tradition* in the Church;

not as something against the Bible or foreign from it; but still not as a mere derivation either or efflux simply from its pages; a tradition which starts from the original substance of Christianity itself, as it underlies the Bible, and which in such form becomes the living stream into which continuously the sense of the Bible is poured, through the Holy Ghost, from age to age, onward to the end of the world. This divine tradition meets us under its clearest, most primitive and most authoritative character, in the Apostles' Creed.

II. The idea of the Creed, as now given, throws light on the true character of the Church, as related to Christ in one direction and to the Bible in another. The Creed represents the primary substance of Christianity, as it has passed over from Christ in the form of life, into the general consciousness of his people. This general life is the Church. It is of course, a divine fact in the world, and so of right an article of faith more immediately than the Bible itself. First the Church, and then the Bible. So in the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," instead of: "I believe in the Holy Inspired Bible;" not certainly to put any dishonor on this last; but to lay rather a solid foundation for its dignity and authority in the other article; for, after all, it is the Church, next to Christ, and not the Bible, save as comprehended in the Church, which according to St. Paul, is "the pillar and ground of the truth." Is this to throw Christ into the shade, as the opposers of the Church sometimes pretend? Just as little, we reply, as faith in the divine authority of the Bible tends to throw him into the shade. The Church *may* be so magnified as to wrong Christ; but it is just as possible, and at this time also, just as common, to magnify the Bible in a like bad way, at Christ's expense; as where men, for instance, insist on sundering it from the objective fact of Christianity itself, the life of Christ in the Church, and force it to become instead the vehicle only of their own private judgment and proud self-will. Neither the Church, however, nor the Bible, can be held responsible for any such abuse. In their own nature, they do homage perpetually to Christ. The Church is but the living revelation of his presence and power, from age to age, in the world. The Bible is his written word. In this view, both are required to go

together. Christianity is the proper union of both. Neither can fulfil its mission, apart from the other. The Church, to be true to her vocation, must be ruled by the Bible; if any pretend to follow her voice, without regard to this, they will be led astray. But the converse of this is no less certain. The Bible to be a true word of Christ, must be ruled by the life of the Church; if any pretend to follow it without regard to this, they too will most assuredly miss the truth. Will it be said that this is a circle? Be it so. In such circle precisely, is it the divine prerogative of faith, at all times firmly and serenely to move.

III. Christianity, as such a divine fact in the consciousness of the Church, is historical. The idea of history is opposed both to dead tradition and to dead change. It moves; it lives; it grows. So the Creed originally came to pass. In its very conception thus, it makes room for a continuous historical evolution of the christian life on all sides. To take it as the end of all Christianity, is to mistake its nature entirely. It is only the form in which it begins. Christianity must be far more than such beginning. Its mission is, not merely to cover the earth with its outward presence, but to occupy and rule inwardly also the universal being of man. It must regenerate the thinking of the world and all its action; it carries in itself, accordingly, the possibility of becoming such a reconstruction or intensification of our universal life, from the start. The substance then which it exhibits primitively in the Creed, is by no means bound to that, either as a rigid shell or loose drapery; but widens itself continually, in the way of historical concrete growth, and unfolds its inward wealth in forms as manifold as the complex fact of humanity itself. So in particular it admits and requires a progressive theology; for why should not Christianity occupy our nature in the form of science, as well as in the form of action or feeling? Theology implies doctrines. These come, for the understanding, by gradual process. Hence each single doctrine has its history, and theology is historical as a whole. The history in this case is not something outward only, but enters into the very substance of the christian fact itself; so that in any right view of the case, it is just as necessary for theology to be historical, as it is for it to be biblical. History is one of the factors, by

which it is brought to pass and made to have in itself a real existence. True faith in the Creed then, does not require us to renounce all interest in theology, and fall back on the primary christian consciousness as the *ne plus ultra* of the new creation ; on the contrary, it is just what we need to overthrow the idea of all such stability, and fit us for the right appreciation of theology as a continuously progressive science. To have faith in the Church, is to have faith at the same time in History. The spirit of the Creed is not radical. It is the spirit of Sect, ever violent and abrupt by its very constitution, that seeks to nullify the whole christian process since the days of the Apostles. To a mind in sympathy with the Creed, that process is ever something sacred and divine, no less, we may say, than the primitive faith itself.

IV. With such historical character, all true theology, at the same time, grows forth from the Creed, and so remains bound to it perpetually as its necessary radix or root. History is not progress in the way of outward local remove from one point to another, but progress that carries the sense with which it is freighted onward and upwards always into new forms. It resembles the growth of a tree or the gradual evolution of our individual human life. It is a river, which carries itself forward with its own flow, ever changing and yet ever the same. The relation of the Creed then to the forms of sound christian doctrine which have since appeared, is simply this, that they are to be regarded as lying silently involved in it from the beginning, though some time was needed to bring them to clear and distinct utterance. The great articles of christian theology come from the Bible ; but, at the same time, they are *mediated* or brought to pass for the mind of the Church, only through the presence and power of the primitive christian consciousness, (expressed in the Creed,) as something already at hand. It is no defect in the Creed, that it contains not several most important and necessary articles of a sound theology as the Church now stands, the inspiration of the Scriptures, for instance, or the doctrine of justification by faith. On the other hand, however, such articles lose no credit or authority whatever, by the fact of such omission. The only question is, do they flow from the substance of Christianity as given in the Creed, and do they hold in it and from it perpetually as

their vital root. This, after all, is complete, under its own form, as an utterance of the primary *fact* of Christianity; and it only follows that other articles have their truth and importance, not in the same primary way, but all the more surely, for this very reason, in the way of derivation and outflow from what goes before. We reach thus this great practical conclusion, that the orthodoxy of every doctrine is fairly tested at last by its inward correspondence or want of correspondence with the Creed. It is not enough that it seem to be biblical from some other stand point; its biblicality must be evident, as seen *through* the fundamental substance of Christianity embodied in this universal faith of the Holy Catholic Church. It is not enough that a doctrine be sound in form; if it refuse notwithstanding to coalesce inwardly with the spirit of the Creed, it convicts itself of substantial falsehood. Take in illustration, the article of justification by faith, Luther's criterion of a standing or falling Church. It is not sufficient, surely, that it be accepted in a merely general and abstract way. Our sects, United Brethren, Albright Brethren, Winebrennerians, and a score of others to the same general tune, readily meet for the most part, on this ground; one trying to outdo another, in its zeal for this particular side of religion. And yet Luther would have denounced the whole of them, as a worse plague than the locusts of Pharaoh. Do we ask, why? With Luther, the article had firm and fast root in the Creed, the historical substance of the old catholic christian life; whereas, with these upstart sects, it is a mere abstraction or fancy, which makes no account of the old catholic faith whatever, and so proves itself to be the growth of some other soil, the product simply of the human brain. These sects have no sympathy with the Creed; they do not stand in it with their inward life; their theology starts not out of it at all, as its primitive ground. *Thus* held, the article of justification by faith ceases to be true, and is no longer safe, but full of peril for all the interests of religion. So would all the Reformers say, with one voice.*

* *Professor Tayler Lewis*, of the New York University, in his manly and truly able review of the Mercersburg School, as he calls it, published in Nos. 114 and 115, of the *Literary World*, expresses some apprehension of

V. Regard for the Creed then, may be taken as a fair measure of sound church character, as distinguished from the spirit of sect and schism. In its whole conception and life, the Creed is catholic, inwardly bound to the true universal power of the Christian life, as it stood in the beginning. Hence it will be found invariably, that the sect spirit, whose essential nature it is to be abrupt, violent, unhistorical and upstart, leads, if not openly, at least quietly, always, to the abandonment of the venerable symbol altogether. Sect piety has no relish for the Creed; it cannot utter itself naturally in any such way; it makes no account, in truth of Christianity in that form. The genius of Puritanism, as we have already seen, is also strikingly at variance with the same rule. The fact admits no doubt. It stares upon us in the almost universal neglect into which the Creed has fallen, wherever Puritanism prevails. It will not do to say, that this neglect is more apparent than real, and that the substance of the Creed is still in honor, though not its particular form. The difficulty is, precisely, that the form is such as will not easily allow another substance to be put into it, than that which belongs to it in truth; on which account, the use of it is felt to be uncongenial with the

the danger there is of wronging the forensic side of our salvation, in trying to make too much of Christ as the bearer of life for us in a real way. He allows both, but seems to think that the first interest forms for our faith the safety of the second. "The incarnation and the crucifixion," he remarks, "are the fundamentals of our faith. It may be admitted too, that the first is the necessary ground of the value of the second; but all ecclesiastical experience has shown, that for us, and to us, in our unrecovered state, the latter is the nearest truth, that it has the most of moral power, and that when vividly sustained, it has ever sustained the belief in the coördinate mystery." This we cannot admit. The forensic interest is full as liable to run wild, as the other. So we see in the case of our unsacramental sects, on all sides. The true order is, the mystery of the incarnation first, and then the atonement, as growing forth from this, and *only in such view*. Such is the conception of the Creed. Peter's confession is the rock that must underlie, in our minds, all other divinity. Protestantism can be of true and genuine growth, only as it grows forth from *catholicity*, the primitive substance of christianity as a fact, made to break on the sense of the soul through the apprehension of Christ's person. A sound *christology*, involving always the idea of a sound church life, is indispensable, we more and more believe, to all true orthodoxy at other points.

true life of Puritanism, as something which is, in fact, not inwardly harmonious with the life of the ancient Church. Hence such use in this case can never be easy, natural and free, but produces always some sense of awkward and stiff constraint. Puritanism must wrest the Creed into quite a different sense from its own original meaning, to be able at all to acquiesce in its several articles. Left to itself, it would fall on a very different scheme of fundamental and necessary truth. It can see no reason why the Creed carries just its present form, or why so much should be left out of it, that Puritanism is apt to think of first, in its own abstract way. The orthodoxy of New England, for instance, can hardly be said at all to grow forth organically from the primitive mind or consciousness of the Church, as embodied in this symbol. Is not this strange and startling fact entitled to some consideration? We are firmly persuaded that it will be felt to be solemnly significant, in proportion exactly as it is made the subject of earnest thought. An orthodoxy which owns no inward fellowship with the Creed, and which feels itself complete in a wholly different way without it, deserves to be regarded with distrust, and may well be asked to give a reason of the hope that is in it under such abstract and unhistorical form. We are free to confess, that, in our view, any scheme of Christianity to which the voice of the Creed has become thus strange, labors under a most serious defect; and we need no other proof than the general fact here noticed, to show what is shown by so many proofs besides, that Puritanism, with all its great excellencies and merits, involves a material falling away from the faith of the sixteenth century as well as from that of the early Church.

VI. For the settlement of our existing theological and ecclesiastical difficulties, the first and most indispensable necessity is a true and hearty inward submission to the authority of the Creed, according to its original intention and design. Not that this is to be taken as of itself the sum and end of all theology; but all sound doctrine and true church life, must proceed forth from a common faith here, as their only sure ground, and it is vain to dream of their being prosperously advanced in any other way. It is mere loss of time, for instance, to argue the question of election, or that of infant baptism, with those who are not imbued,

in the first place, with a true reverence for the Apostles' Creed. It is, in truth, of very little consequence, in such case, whether it be the affirmative or the negative of any such question that is maintained; as growing forth organically, not from the primary substance of the Christian faith at all, but from some other ground altogether, the opinion whether right or wrong in its notional and formal character, is sure to be in its inward material constitution, unchristian and wrong. So, as we have just seen, the doctrine of justification itself, in its right outward shape, may become, through such divorce from the life of the Creed, in the highest degree false and dangerous. Election, the atonement, imputation, &c., can have no validity as christian doctrines, in an abstract view, but only as they can be developed from the concrete mystery here apprehended by faith. Theology in any other form, is always necessarily rationalistic, an effort to build faith on intellection, whereas the true order is just the reverse. This rightly understood and felt, would at once greatly narrow the field of theological controversy, as well as greatly facilitate the proper conclusion of its cardinal debates. How much, especially of our modern disputation, our *sect-fights*, we may say, generally, would be found by this rule to be little better than mere *skiomachy*, the battling of phantom shapes projected on the air. The first condition of all sound theology is, active sympathy with historical Christianity, with the idea of the Church, with the catholic mystery of the Creed. So also as regards all church questions; we do but run ourselves into endless talk, if we propose to settle them from any other ground, or in any other frame of mind. For instance, the question of using, or not using, a settled liturgy in public worship; how much of the argument on both sides, do we not find proceeding under a wholly different, and, therefore, wholly unsatisfactory form? The interest is vindicated or opposed on purely outward grounds, instead of being referred, as it should be, first of all, to the interior demands of Christianity itself, as embodied in the Creed. Or take the question of *Episcopacy*. It has been much the fashion to place it all round, on such *ab extra* proofs and reasons, as though the point were to make out a simply external warrant for or against it, independently altogether of the contents of the christian life itself. Thus Episcopalians

often try to find it outwardly prescribed in the New Testament; a vain and hopeless task, which only serves to countenance the equally vain and fruitless attempt, on the other side, to overthrow it in the same mechanical way. To make Episcopacy the necessary hedge of Christianity, which we are to be sure of first on outside reasons, whether biblical or historical, in order that we may then be sure of the inclosed truth, is just again to subordinate faith rationalistically to the lower authority of the understanding; for how can such a purely outward and mechanical authority be a whit better at last, than any other form of thought and will which is not ruled by the very substance of the truth itself. Who may not see, that if Episcopacy be indeed the *first* thing towards a sound faith, it ought to come first also in the Creed, or, at least, to follow immediately the general article of the Holy Ghost; whereas, in truth, as we all know, it has no place in the Creed whatever. Are we then, at once, to infer from this, on the other hand, that Episcopacy is false, or that no definite organization is required as the normal form of the Church? By no means. Only this is not the way in which the question can ever be settled. What we need for that, especially just now, is a general hearty return to the catholic life of the Creed, as the necessary point of departure for coming to a true solution of all our church questions. This we firmly believe is something that *can* take place extensively, long before we are able to see at all to the *end* of the perplexing difficulties with which we are now surrounded; and that *must* take place, indeed, before a single step can be successfully made towards their proper practical resolution. It is the idea of the Church, the mystery of Christianity as it is made sure to us by faith in the Apostles' Creed, something older certainly, and deeper in its own nature, than any mere outward hedge surrounding it, which we are bound first of all to embrace; which alone is sufficient to draw after it any right theory or practice, as regards all other church interests; and which, therefore, we have it in our power to begin with, as an *a priori* foundation, for reaching in the end the results that the case requires. A convention of sects to negotiate a federal Church, is much like a convention of the blind to settle the laws of light. We must be in the Creed, and so have faith in the Church, in

order to find it, or to settle its exact form and limits. This is the true method for bringing to an issue the sacramental question, the liturgical question, the question of festival days. An active revival of the consciousness expressed in the Creed, would in due time restore all these great interests to their pristine authority. And we will just add, in the way of friendly hint to Episcopalians, that if their favorite system of church polity *could* be vindicated as necessary, in this way, to the conservation of the great catholic ideas that enter into the primitive faith, it would be, in our estimation, an argument of more weight and force in its favor, than whole tomes of learning employed to establish its authority in an outward and abstract view.

J. W. N.

ART. XXI.—THE RULE OF FAITH.—*Concluded.*

HAVING defined our subject and glanced at its earlier history,* we shall next *notice the leading false theories of it, which more or less prevail*, and conclude with *a statement of the evangelical doctrine in the case.*

III. It has been the mournful destiny of the Church and her ordinances, from the first, to be perverted and scandalized by the false zeal or the depravity of those professing to be her sincere friends. Driven thus from one extreme to another, and tossed by the contentions ever connected with such movements, her history presents, in this view, an ever varying scene of agita-

* Which was explicitly stated to be the *sole object* of the former article, and more than which, consequently, no intelligent reader would expect to find in it. As to the *definition* given, it is hoped that those who did not discover it at first, have been so fortunate as to find it since, lying very quietly in simple *italics*, and in its proper place, about the middle of p. 50. If they have not, we really know of no better remedy than *pica*!

tions, giving full occasion for grief and wonder, fear and hope. Her constant subjection to abuse from human ignorance, pride, or passion, awakens sorrow and alarm, whilst the continual evidence we have that an Omnipotent Agency is overruling all for a most triumphant issue to these alarming conflicts, must call forth admiration of the mighty power of God, as exhibited in the Past, and inspire confidence in its all-sufficiency for the Future. No doubt but the end will prove that, as the *fall* was the necessary antecedent to Redemption, the suffering life and ignominious death of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the conquest of death and hell, and the falling away, and "blindness in part that hath happened unto Israel," to the gathering in of the Gentiles, so all these violent perversions of Christianity are essential to the working out of the great scheme of grace which God is executing by the Church.

An illustration of what has thus happened to the Church in general, is afforded by the fate of the subject in hand. For clear and well-settled as the primitive doctrine and practice in reference to the Rule of Faith must have been, tendencies to departure from it very soon began to work and show themselves. This is implied in the complaints of Paul already, concerning those on the one hand, "who opposed and exalted themselves above all that was called God," "departing from the faith, and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;" and of those on the other hand, who were "lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, * disobedient to parents, * * * traitors, heady, highminded, * * who, as James and Jambres withstood Moses, so they resisted the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, * * deceiving and being deceived." With these complaints of Paul, others of Peter, James, and Jude fully agree, and all show that the mystery of iniquity did then already work. The aim and purpose of these departures from the creed of the early Church upon this subject, we are expressly told, was to loosen the hold of the faithful upon "the traditions they had been taught, whether by word or by epistle," and thus to turn them from following Paul (and the other representatives of the Church) as he followed Christ. But though their aim was thus *one*, the *forms* which they severally assumed, were almost as diversified as the instan-

ces of their occurrence were numerous. They may, however, be reduced to *three general classes*, to which those existing at the present day are intimately allied. They will also be found to stand in close inward relation to each other, (notwithstanding the apparent outward conflict,) whilst all of them cling to the 'Truth, like the gum and other excrescences of a wounded tree, seeking to rid itself of the worm deposited to feed upon its strength. And firm must be the sinews, and vigorous the life of that old vine, which has been able so long and successfully to contend against these and similar pernicious foreign elements, so likely to effect its ruin!

The *first* of these *false theories* that claims attention, is that which signalizes the Romish Confession, and which is, indeed, "the ground and pillar" of its strength. It consists in an extreme abuse of that side of the gospel principle which provides for the proper subordination of the part to the whole, of the members to the body, by perverting it into a despotic hierarchy, in which the christian principle is frustrated, because the rights of the individual are destroyed. This theory may be summed up in the following proposition: *In all matters of faith and practice, the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, with its interpretation of them, are of divine authority, because the Church is infallible.* This is the substance of the decree of Trent upon the subject. That Council, at its fourth session, decided as follows: "Praeterea, ad coercenda petulantia ingenia, docerint, ut nemo, suae prudentiae innixus, in rebus fidei, et morum, ad aedificationem doctrinae Christianae pertinentium, sacram scripturam ad suos sensus contorquens, *contra eum sensum, quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione scripturarum sanctarum*, aut etiam contra unanimen consensum Patrum, ipsam Scripturam sacram interpretari audeat."* It is not our purpose in this brief review of false theories, to arraign and condemn the authors of them as being influenced only by the

* As it altogether suits the design of this essay better, the language of the decree is given in the original. Those who desire, may find a good translation of all the Decrees of the Council, (with the original appended,) in "Cramp's Text-book of Popery."

most wicked motives in their production and defence. Rather would we go upon the opposite presumption, and hope, that whatever may be true of some who advocate error upon this subject, others are sincere in believing it to be truth, and as such essential to the maintenance and furtherance of the gospel. But certainly, a more subtle mixture of truth and error, a more cunning wrapping up of the poison in sweet and precious truth, could hardly be conceived of, than is exhibited in this decree. For who will deny that "petulant minds" ought to be restrained? Or that "Christian doctrine should be maintained?" Or that any one should so "confide in his own judgment" as to "wrest the sacred Scriptures to his own sense of them?" Or that the Church is holy and our Mother, and hath held and still holds that which it becomes all to believe? In what, then, does the error of this doctrine of Rome consist? Let her own version and interpretation of it answer.

The creed of Pope Pius already furnishes a significant paraphrase of it: "*Apostolicas et ecclesiasticas traditiones, reliquosque ejusdem ecclesiae observationes et constitutiones firmissime admitto, et amplector. Item sacram scripturam juxta eum sensum, quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu et interpretatione sacrarum scripturarum, admitto; nec eam unquam, nisi juxta unanimem consensum patrum accipiam, et interpretabor.*"

If now we turn to accredited writers in the Romish Communion for a further exposition of their doctrine, we shall find the proposition laid down above, fully sustained by their own avowals. From a great abundance of evidence, we shall adduce the testimony of only a few witnesses, and those of the better sort.

Bellarmino affirms, in defence of the Romish doctrine, "that scripture is very often obscure and ambiguous, so that *unless it be interpreted by some one who cannot err, it cannot be understood*; hence it is not sufficient alone." (De Verb. iv. 4.) That "one who cannot err," is afterwards declared to be Tradition speaking through the Popes and Councils of the Roman Church.

Knott, in the memorable controversy with Chillingworth, asserts still more boldly, that the traditions of that church, with her interpretation of them, is the only and sufficient judge in all

religious disputes, because of her infallibility, defending this position as the doctrine of his church. He says, after laboring to show that the holy Scriptures are in themselves insufficient, and that the Church is invested with infallibility to make up for this deficiency of the word: "I conclude, therefore, with this argument; whosoever resisteth that means which infallibly proposeth to us God's word or revelation, commits a sin, which, unrepented, excludes salvation: but whosoever resisteth Christ's visible Church, doth resist that means which infallibly proposeth God's word: 'Therefore, &c., * * * Now, what visible church was extant, when Luther began his pretended reformation * * *, is easy to be determined.'*" This he determines himself, in another place, to be none other than the Roman Catholic.

Pallavicini, one of the most esteemed and distinguished advocates of Rome, confirms this testimony when he declares: "The whole of our faith rests upon one indivisible article, viz: *the infallible authority of the Church.*"

Another eminent writer, whose notoriety has been rendered more extensive than was probably thought desirable, (though he is of standard authority in the Church,) tells us that the doctrine of the Church is, that "*divine tradition is a Rule of Faith, and whatever the Catholic (Roman) Church declares as such, is to be regarded as tradition.*" And again in reply to the question: "What is the judge of controversies concerning the faith and customs? The Church, whether scattered or assembled in general Council, and the Pope, the head of the Church." (Den's Theology, translated by Rev. Dr. Berg.)

But it is useless to multiply proofs in so plain a case. Indeed the doctrine, as set forth in the foregoing quotations, is so precious to every true Papist, that, rather than invalidate it by a denial, he would seek to corroborate it by additional testimony. So firm is the Church's determination to maintain this doctrine, and so zealous are her sons in their defence of it that we are warmly assured by a man of as much learning and seeming sincerity as Dr. Wiseman, that "the moment any Roman Catholic doubts, not alone the principles of faith, but any one of those doctrines

* "Charity maintained by Catholics." Chap. ii. § 27.

which are thereon based, the moment he allows himself to call in question any of the dogmas which the Church teaches, as having been handed down within her, that moment the Church conceives him to have virtually abandoned all connexion with her."*

This, then, is the doctrine of Rome, concerning the Rule of Faith, the iron sceptre of its spiritual despotism over the millions that do patient, and, mostly, willing homage to its authority! And why should it not be true? Can it be, as some would persuade us, that it has nothing in it but the most irrational absurdity, and yet finds so many intelligent and some unquestionably pious advocates? Were it not every way desirable to have an infallible organ of Truth? Is not the Church of Christ the divinely constituted depository, channel, and exponent of God's revelations to men? Did not her exalted Head promise to her His own continual presence, and the constant assistance of the Holy Ghost, that she might be kept in the truth to the end of time? And do not the endless schisms and jarring discords, that seem to be necessarily consequent upon a denial of this authority of the Church, and to prevail most among those who reject this doctrine, all prove it essential to the preservation of the unity of the faith, and the peace of the Church, and the comfort and edification of her members?

To these and similar questions, honestly considered, there can be but one answer. And yet, though our reply be affirmative, we are by no means committed to the Romish dogma. For even waiving the consideration of all its fearful effects and the terrible consequences which have always, in fact, flown from the practice of it, as the history of the Papacy will testify, and which is strong circumstantial evidence against it, there are insuperable objections to it, as it stands, by which, upon its own principles, it is condemned. The *first* is found in its *peculiar form of Church Government*. The Council of Trent gives us no definition of the Church, and the creed of Pius IV. fails to supply the deficiency. But standard writers define it to be "a body of men united in the profession of the same christian faith, and

* Wiseman's Lectures. Vol. i. p. 65.

communion of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, and particularly of the Roman pontiff, Christ's only vicar on earth."* If now, according to the decree of Trent, already quoted, "the right to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of sacred writ," belongs exclusively to "Holy Mother Church," then according to the above definition, it belongs to those who constitute this church, or to such as they may delegate with such authority. The decision and judgment must be that of the whole "body of men (so) united"—*all* must be permitted to examine Scripture and tradition, in order to its being truly ascertained what the Church, of which each member is equally a constituent part, has held and does hold. But is any thing like this allowed in the Romish Church? Is there such a thing known as the right of the common membership to their part in the examination and adoption of doctrines and discipline? Have they any thing to say in the election of popes, the appointment of cardinals, the consecration of bishops, the ordination of priests, or even the admission to church fellowship of private members? Are they consulted in the calling of councils, or the appointment of delegates thereto, or in their debates and decisions when convened? Have they ever been? Will, or can they ever be, as long as the Papacy remains? If not, how does the Roman Catholic Church know what the Church holds or rejects as doctrine or tradition? And if it is necessary to know this, in order to our having a certain Rule of Faith, how can that Church lay claims to any, seeing she has ever denied the Church (according to her own definition of it) a voice in a single doctrine, sacrament, or custom, which she holds and imposes as divine?

But even if this difficulty were not in the way, the Romish doctrine can be refuted on its own principles, for that small aristocratic portion of the Church of Rome, which has usurped the prerogatives of the whole, has neither been *unanimous* nor *infallible* in determining upon or interpreting its doctrines and traditions. And yet they teach that unanimity and infallibility are essential to a sufficient Rule of Faith. Out of its own mouth, therefore, it stands condemned here again.

* Bellarmine de Eccles. militante, c. 2.

The proof of this assertion will hardly be insisted upon. The history of Popery, with all its vaunted unity, unanimity and unchangeableness, is an almost uninterrupted chain of testimony to it. And the ever reiterated charges of the want of all these desirable qualities, brought against Protestantism by the friends of Rome, have provoked a longer and louder array of such proof than has been at all agreeable. One or two instances in point, under each head, is all that we shall give at present.

In the Roman Church, then, we have no *unanimity*. Tradition, in numerous cases, is arrayed against tradition. Thus in reference to the doctrine of *purgatory*, Cyprian is appealed to, among many others, as satisfactory traditionary authority in its favor. And yet, this church father expressly affirms: "When once we have departed hence, there is no longer any place for repentance, no longer any effectiveness of satisfaction. Here, life is either lost or held: here, we may provide for our eternal salvation by the worship of God and the fruitfulness of faith. . . . To him who confesses, pardon is freely granted: to him who believes, a saving indulgence is granted from the divine pity: and immediately after death, he passes to a blessed immortality."

The same discrepancy exists in the invention of *image-worship*. The Council of Elvira (early in the fourth century) decreed that the testimony of tradition was totally opposed to the worship or adoration of paintings or images. And when, in the course of time, superstition and will-worship prevailed in the introduction and abuse of them, the Council of Constantinople (A. D. 754) reiterated this decree with additional remonstrances, appealing for authority to the accumulated testimony of tradition. But, only thirty-three years later, the Council of Nice reversed their decision, disowned and denounced the Council, and required all the faithful to "*salute and adore the unpolluted image of our Lord Jesus Christ, our true God, and the holy image of the holy mother of God who bore him.*" And all this was done in accordance with Tradition! Indeed the array of traditionary proofs brought forward at that memorable synod, was so overwhelming, as to convince and convert many that had gone to the Council for the purpose of opposing all image-worship as gross idolatry! In charity, however, to Rome, and to

common sense, we shall not repeat the strange legends here, lest the sanity of the three hundred and fifty bishops composing that council might fall into suspicion! Still it is an important illustration of the open hostility in which tradition is made to stand against tradition.

Another instance, equally remarkable, is met with in what has and has not been, is and is not, the doctrine of the Romish Church upon the free circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue among the laity. On the one hand, tradition and the decrees of councils are freely cited against it. This is done even by Fenelon in his letter to the Bishop of Arras, on "The Use of the Bible." On the other hand, however, the excellent L. v. Ess. occupies twenty-eight of the forty-four pages of the interesting and instructive introduction to his translation of the New Testament, with precious testimony, gathered from all ages of the Church, in favor of the free circulation and diligent study of the Holy Scriptures by all classes of Christians. By which of these traditions does the Roman Church abide, and by which would she be judged? Certainly, in view of facts like these, she can no longer support her claim to be sole arbiter in matters of faith and practice, upon the ground of *unanimity* in doctrine!

But her other prop of *infallibility* is equally frail, and breaks under the weight of her own anathemas. For whether the seat of this infallibility be lodged in popes, or cardinals, or councils, those of one age, though pronounced infallible in all their decisions, have been convicted of error by those of another. And this has been and is the case upon almost every doctrine peculiar to the Papacy. Gregory the great was but the mouthpiece of his age, when he vociferated: "*Whoever claims the universal episcopate, is the forerunner of Antichrist.*" And it would fill volumes to record the contentions and debates which attended the development of this doctrine. At length, however, the Council of Florence (1439) boldly and unequivocally ordains: "*We define that the holy apostolic see, and the Roman Pontiff, have a primacy over the whole world, * * * that he is the head of the whole Church, * * * and that to him, in St. Peter, was delegated by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed, rule and govern the universal Church.*" The Catechism of Trent also proclaims

him, "the father and governor of all the faithful, of bishops also, and of all other prelates, be their station, rank or power what they may." And on the strength of this Church authority, Bp. Hughes had the candor and courage, only a few weeks ago, to inform a New York audience that the Pope was considered "subject to no man, be he king, or president."

Now both these doctrines, the one denying and the other affirming papal supremacy, cannot be true. And yet both are taught by an infallible Church!

If any more instances of such glaring contradictions are desired, we must refer those wishing to see a full investigation of them, to "Edgar's variations of Popery," where the whole subject is amply discussed.

The conclusion, therefore, to which this review of the Romish theory of the Rule of Faith leads us, is clearly this: *In matters of faith and practice, the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, with its interpretation of them, cannot be the only or true judge, because they deny the Church a voice in their adoption, and because they contradict and condemn each other.* As long as this is the case, it is unnecessary to press other objections.

Doubtless, if the Papacy were found, upon examination, to adhere to the accredited doctrines of the Church, as held during the first four centuries, and always to have been consistent with itself in its decisions and decrees, many that now denounce it as an apostacy, would be numbered among its most faithful children. But it is precisely because *neither is true of Rome*, that Rome is what it is. Upon her own principle, her present doctrines and customs cannot be of divine authority, for they contradict those traditions which bear the stamp of her approbation; and her own mouth has condemned to-day as false, those very doctrines for *denying* which she banned and burned others not many days ago!

Indeed it had been well for the cause of truth and mercy, if the Papacy had ever remained faithful to its earlier traditions, and infallibly maintained and practised them. The most pernicious errors of Rome, those antichristian elements which are bound up in her very life, which have made her a blighting curse where she might always have been a blessing, date from her de-

parture from the track of traditions previously acknowledged and revered. And we are free to confess that, to our view, the Romish Church seems more deserving of reprobation on this account than any other. Her huge heresies of Purgatory, and efficacious prayers for the dead, of image-worship, saint-worship, and satisfaction for sin, of papal supremacy, indulgences, transubstantiation, celibacy and persecution of heretics, which she now fastens with fetters of brass on the consciences of her members, as doctrines taught by divine traditions, are all modern inventions in comparison with those received as genuine in the earlier ages of her history. And shall we now receive those things as true which bear the brand of her own condemnation? Let her first reconcile these contradictions before she requires assent to her creed!

That a despotic dogma like this of Rome, would excite violent resistance, is in full harmony with the laws of our nature. Justice and humanity required that those precious rights of man, which it rudely trampled upon, should be vindicated and released. The very cause of truth and unity, which this dogma professed most securely to entrench and fortify against all encroachments and perils, demanded deliverance from a bondage that had *buried* both for their preservation. And moreover, if there existed a tendency on the one side to run one part of the gospel principle into the hierarchical extreme of the Romish theory, there existed an equally strong tendency on the other side to carry another part of that principle into an opposite extreme. The workings of this tendency are by no means confined to modern times. It is found exerting itself simultaneously with the other in all ages of the Church. We are now concerned, however, with it in its present form, and as it is advocated and practiced upon by a portion of our brethren of the Protestant Communion. And here we find it maintaining that "*every man has an inalienable right to test any doctrine by the sacred scriptures, and to adopt or reject it, accordingly,*" as he may suppose it to agree or disagree therewith. And though it is admitted that this right must "not involve the casting off of all respect for Church authority, nor contempt for the opinions of the venerable, learned and pious, nor denial of accountability to God" (?) still "it does reserve to him the liberty to form his own opinion at last," with regard *not to the less essen-*

tial only, but *all* the doctrines that may claim attention. This theory is sometimes more plausibly expressed, by affirming that "*the Bible is the only Rule of Faith*" for Christians. In such hands as those of Chillingworth and Tillotson, both of whom plant their foot upon it in opposing the Romish view, it is made to command respect, especially as contrasted in its bearings with those of the dogma against which it is arrayed. And in any honest and sincere hands, it must, if intelligently discussed, always commend itself as a bold rampart raised, with the laudable design, at least, of defending the rights of the weakest member of the Church, against the aggressions and impositions of a spiritual aristocracy.

The reasons usually assigned in favor of this theory, are fairly represented by the following, quoted from a recent article upon the subject, in which it is zealously defended: First, it is argued, "there is no good reason why this right (of judging for one's self) should be denied to some men and granted to others." Secondly. "It is impossible to find an authorized and infallible judge of the sense of Scripture." Thirdly. It follows from the fact "of every man's personal accountability." Fourthly. "The Scriptures themselves teach the right of private judgment." And finally, none of the objections arrayed against this doctrine are valid, whilst "history and the common sense of mankind sustain the opinion that we are a thousand times more likely to make infidels, by sending men for light to Church opinions and traditions, than by sending them directly to the Bible, and the Bible only."

An elaborate and a particular refutation of these several reasons is cheerfully assigned to those who may think it necessary. We shall say nothing else or worse of them, than they are certainly as weighty and forcible as any usually advanced on the Romish side, and vastly more rational than the arguments by which the 2nd Council of Nice defended their doctrine of image-worship! It is a pity, however, if the body of the theory is sound, that it has such weak legs! But we have a general objection to urge against it, which, if well-founded, will answer for all others. *This theory, in substance and effect, considers the individual christian as holding morally an isolated position with reference to the Church,*

and invests him, accordingly, with complete independence of all spiritual relations, and full authority to act for himself in all matters of religion. The branch must receive such substance as belongs to the stock that bears it, and appropriate the light and rain of heaven, in accordance with the law of its species. But these twigs of the spiritual vine may set out upon an independent existence, if they think it best, i. e. if they choose, and bear what and when they please, without the risk of excision. The citizen of the state, if a good and orderly one, is expected to receive the law at the mouth of the properly constituted authorities, to whom he himself, in union with others, has delegated the requisite power, and he does not for a moment think of setting up his private judgment in vindication of his rights; but the citizen of our great spiritual commonwealth must let his hands and tongue be tied by no such fetters as these, but has guarantied to him the right to think and judge, untrammelled, for himself! True, there may be, and it is mostly expedient that there should be, VOLUNTARY associations of those of one persuasion, conglomerated under certain *freely adopted* laws of combination, to which those willing to be members, are bound *by their own free act of consent*, so long as they choose to continue in such voluntary companionship. But no one is bound to bow to such authority, nor obligated to curtail his moral liberties by any such annoying limitations, unless it be his good pleasure so to do! If a man, considered in a social aspect, should find no existing condition of society exactly suited to his taste or principles, and would, accordingly, withdraw from all human fellowship, to enjoy the sweet privileges of unbroken solitude, his peculiar fancy would be attributed to some mental derangement. But in his religious character he may, if, in his own best judgment, all existing creeds and confessions of christian communities around him, are thought erroneous, separate from all, and convert himself into a solitary anchorite, and so secure the glorious prerogatives of a christian freeman!

This is virtually the theory, with some of its legitimate inferences, which is warmly advocated by many sincere and intelligent protestants. It is held forth as the *beau ideal* of liberty in general, and as the glory of the Christian religion in particular!

Oh! the bliss of being permitted and encouraged to think for one's self, (even though it may never be done,) with the pleasant conviction that in doing so, we are sure to be right, though all others should be thereby proven wrong!

All this may sound very well to some ears. It is, no doubt, honestly considered by its advocates, to be the only theory that is in harmony with the truth and consistent with personal responsibility and duty. but it is certainly not the doctrine of the Bible, nor compatible with the true idea of the Church. In its zeal for the protection of the individual, it would sacrifice the rights of the whole body to which he belongs—a procedure which finds no countenance or palliation in the writings or doings of the holy Apostles and primitive Church. If this were the religion of Protestantism, our blessed cause would soon be its own destruction.

It is well, however, and worthy of special notice, that this view exists and prevails as it does, much more in theory than in practice. That with all the warm declamation indulged in favor of the right and duty of private judgment, comparatively few of those who advocate it in this form, ever think of reducing it to practice themselves, and still less expect others to do so. Though a long sermon may be delivered in praise of such christian liberty, at the end of it the application for admission to the church, or the candidate for ordination is expected to subscribe in good faith to every article of the Saybrook Platform or Westminster Confession. Freely as it is allowed to each one to search and see for himself, even some of those most ardent in contending for the privilege, will not hesitate to launch a fierce charge of heresy against all who may happen to see and embrace a view that openly conflicts with "the five points," or some one, even, of the less essentials of sound faith. Indeed those that are bold enough to act out their creed on this subject, are at once excluded from christian fellowship as schismatics and dangerous fellows! So that after all, in this case again, as practice and theory appear in such manifest contradiction, the theory nullifies itself.

We have thus named only the negative difficulties of this ultra-protestant view. For positive objections to it, we refer the reader to what shall be said in another place. But who does not see at once, that, though it is professedly arrayed in direct

opposition to the Romish dogma, it is very nearly the same thing in another form. Both systems agree in investing *one* individual with supreme authority, to judge and decide in all matters of religious controversy—in other words, *in setting up a papacy*. Only in the one case it is the *Pope in Rome*, and in the other the *Pope in the belly*!

Unquestionably, if required to choose either of these theories, we should prefer the latter. But only as *being the least formidable of two evils*. For with all our aversion to it, and dread of its necessarily pernicious consequences, we must own a still greater aversion to a way they have in Rome, of removing practical difficulties to their theory by fire and blood! And the number of those is probably scarce, who desire to be rid of their wrong opinions by losing their heads! We may rejoice, however, in not being shut up to so painful a dilemma!

But rejecting these two apparently opposite and extreme dogmas, the one as doing violence to Christian equality and liberty, and the other as throwing down, theoretically at least, and trampling upon all Christian authority and subordination—the one as binding the hands and the feet, the other tying up the eyes and tongue of the body—and both as hostile to the true idea of the Church—shall we not find the true middle path by adopting as our rule of faith, *the doctrines and traditionary practices of the first three or four centuries of Christianity, insofar as they may be clearly ascertained and agreed upon*, not arbitrarily by popes and councils, and arch-bishops, but by the true catholic Church? Had not the Church of those earlier times the best means of ascertaining the decisions of the Apostles and their immediate disciples, upon *all doctrines* about which there might be any dispute? Did they not possess the best and all needful facilities for knowing the opinions and the practice of the Apostles, in reference to all the customs and rites of our Religion? And is it not fairly presumable that, by the end of the fourth century, at farthest, all things pertaining to the theology and economy of the Church, would be finally settled and perfected? And does not the history of the Church down to that period, and of the venerable and pious fathers, whom God seems to have raised up for the special purpose of effecting such a completion and settlement of the form and

constitution of the Church, altogether favor these suppositions? If then, there is good reason for believing these things to be so, *will it not be best for us to adopt their creed and practices as our own, and submit to them as of binding authority?* Constrained to consent to their apostolic origin, shall we not yield then that respect due to such a source? Has the Church of the hoary and reverend Past, not a right to expect this of us? Will it not prove our wisdom to sit at their feet and learn the law at their lips? Can any safer resort be found? Could any object to such an appeal? Is there any modern division of the Church but would find an impartial umpire there? And would not thus, many of the schisms that now mangle the mystical body of Christ, be healed—would not the angry contentions that mar her peace, in this way be hushed—would not the proud pretensions and personal vanity of self-styled reformers, and the stormy agitations of fanatic zeal, which now bring so much grief and reproach upon Christianity, be rebuked? And might we not thus, soon realize the fulfilment of the day, when the Church, uniting all believers into one body, should come forth, “bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners?”

Thus have the learned Doctors of Oxford, and their disciples, thought and taught. Professedly, and, as there is very good reason to believe, (in opposition to the suspicions cast upon their motives and aims, by some with whom this is the most powerful weapon they can use against those who may hold different sentiments,) *sincerely* lamenting the low state of piety in their own Church, and supposing all this, with the diversities of opinion prevailing, both with reference to doctrines and usages,* traceable to a silent but extensive departure from the original teachings and institutions of the Church, and apprehending a dismemberment of their communion, and a consequent influx and prevalence of infidelity, if the evils were not speedily checked, they have thrown themselves into the supposed breach, and lifted up

* “In the English Church, we shall hardly find ten or twenty neighboring clergymen who agree together; and that, not in non-essentials of religion, but as to what are its elementary and necessary doctrines.” “If the people go to one church, they hear one doctrine, in the next, another.”—*Newman's Lectures*, p. 365.

a loud and earnest voice in favor of their primitive institutions, and supported their appeals and remonstrances by the testimony of earlier traditions—affirming that their Church has ever taught what they now maintain and plead for—that “*acknowledging Scripture as her written charter, and tradition as the common law whereby both the validity and practical meaning of that charter is ascertained, venerates both as inseparable members of one great providential system.*”*

With the gross errors and popish squinting charged upon Puseyism, by its opponents, we have here, of course, nothing to do, and consequently nothing with the controversy upon the subject within the limits of the Episcopal church. But this much it is proper in passing, to say, that as with the subject in hand, so with all the other peculiarities of that system, a personal examination of them has produced impressions very different from those made by the perusal of the statements of those hostile to the Oxford doctrines! And surely insofar as those doctrines are false and dangerous, they need to be met with more powerful arguments than appeals to low prejudices, misrepresentations, and the defamations of those who advocate them!

But what shall we say to this Oxford theory of the Rule of Faith? Shall we reply in the tone and sentiment, which, in another instance, have been employed in reference to this system: 1.) That it “confounds the true Church, or the company of faithful men, with the external and visible Church;” 2.) that “the voice of all professing Christians, everywhere and at all times, it is impossible to ascertain;” 3.) that the decisions of councils, &c., are but of small authority, because “the Church Catholic does not admit of being represented”—and because “councils contradict each other,” and especially because “there was no council having the least pretension to be called general, held during the first three centuries;” 4.) that “the unanimous

* No notice has been taken in this cursory review, of the charge of Romanism which it is usual to prefer against Puseyism, because whatever particular notions the latter system may be thought to hold in common with Popery on other subjects, there is very clearly no more connection between its theory of the Rule of Faith and that of Rome, than between that of ultra-protestantism and the latter.

consent of the fathers of the first three centuries, is (no) proof of the apostolic origin of any doctrine," inasmuch as "the remains of their writings are so scanty;" and they "are not trustworthy" witnesses, because "too credulous;" 5.) and finally, that the advocates of the Oxford school depart from their own theory, by the arbitrary manner in which they adduce the testimony of the age to which they love to appeal? If we did thus oppose their view, we should certainly raise up five very clever reasons against the system. But certainly, its grand error would be scarcely grazed, the roots of it would be left undisturbed. Plausible as they are in themselves, and worthy as most of them may be of consideration and approval, a skilful Puseyite would not only parry every stroke they might seek to inflict, but retort with biting effect. Their own language as quoted by no common adversary, could be made to tell with much more power than he imagines it possessed of. "Why should not the Church be divine? 'The burden of proof is on the other side. I will accept her doctrines, and her rites, and her Bible—not one, and not the other, but all, till I have a clear proof that she is mistaken. It is, *I feel*, God's will that I should do so; and besides I love these her professions, I love her Bible, her doctrines and her rites, and therefore I believe.'" Against the spirit of language like this, the objections above stated, in our opinion, patter with powerless fury. Indeed they hardly reach up to it at all.

Dark and dreary, indeed, were the retrospect, if all that is sometimes said, (and that in the way too of triumphant rejoinder to an opposite view,) of the state of the Church during the first *four* (not the first three) centuries, were true! Meagre and swampy truly, must have been its soil, if it could send up and nourish only such heavy headed bulrushes, or light reeds so easily "shaken by the wind," as are sometimes set forth as its best productions! How soon must the divine promise of continued divine presence and power, have been withdrawn or forgotten! How much more speedily must the Church, her first love being lost, have become recreant to the precious gospel trust committed to her, than were the Jews of old, to that less glorious one deposited in their hands! And all this too, under circumstances the more propitious to a persevering maintenance of the institutions committed to them,

because of the fierce assaults made upon them by enemies from without, and false or self-deceived disciples within! It would surely be among the darkest of all the deep mysteries of our religion, were this so! But there is a sweet relief in knowing that it is not so—and still more in hearing those, who sometimes imagine that the defence of the truth calls for statements implying thus much, acknowledge that the presence of Christ and operations of His holy Spirit, were much more clearly and gloriously manifested during those very ages, than they have at times been willing to admit. Ah! yes, those were burning and shining lights, which then arose on the Church's horizon! And though, by reason of our distance from them, their number seems small, because (as with the more distant stars) those only that blaze most brightly can be seen, yet we have good reason to hope that the final day of revelation will prove our usual estimate of their number, far too low! That day may show that many who now seem to blind the eyes of the Church with the light of their learning, and the dazzling of their wit, are but flickering tapers in comparison with lights of those earlier times, whose rays have never reached us!

It is not, therefore, for its belief in the divine character of the Church, in the continual presence of divine grace and power in her midst, that we must differ from and oppose the Oxford dogma; neither for its fond and filial affection and *respect* for the *Past*, but because its faith in the one and its regard for the other, are sickly with sentimentalism, and inconsistent in their application with their own avowed principle.

This is evident in their reverence for the ancient institutions of the Church. Not all such reverence is of the right texture, nor even what it supposes itself to be. "There is," in language of which the source need not be given here, "a bondage to the power of the Past, by which it is as little honored, as it is by the revolutionary zeal that tramples its authority under foot. A bondage by which it is, in fact, arrayed against itself, and forced to become the grave of its own life. This appears wherever a disposition is shown to cleave to a given standpoint, as the absolute and ultimate perfection of life, and to withstand every tendency or effort by which it is attempted to advance to a new position. All change in such case is regarded, as in its nature,

revolutionary, and the new is supposed to involve, as far as it prevails, the full sacrifice of the old. Hence fidelity to the old, is made to consist in a fixed immobility of spirit, by which, as much as possible, all thought and all life is held to the same traditional form." This is the bondage in which Oxford lies, and into which it would lead the entire Catholic Church. And this mistake is, at least, one fork of the tap-root of its romantic and sentimental system. The great law of progress and development which pervades the Church, in common with humanity and the world, is repudiated and opposed. Instead of falling in with the advancing and swelling stream of Christianity, it would push back the waters to their fountain-head, and linger there amidst the shade and poetic groves of the primitive ages of the Church. Instead of helping forward the "stone cut out of the mountain, without hands," and growing with its spread and increase, until it had subdued all opposition, and covered the earth, this theory would lead us back to Zion, or Gerizin, that gathering upon their rocks, a fortress might be built impregnable by our enemies, in which the Church might patiently and safely await its translation to high ground! Instead of so cultivating "the mustard tree," that it might shoot out its branches with continually wider stretch, until it had reached to the uttermost parts of the world, and extended its sheltering shade over the most distant islands of the sea, it would keep it closely trimmed in, and require all to find room, if they could, within its original limits! The garden of the Lord, in the prophet's eye, was so to extend its borders, as to convert the vast wilderness into a field of blooming and fragrant fertility. But according to this theory, the "ancient landmarks" of Eden, must not be moved by sacrilegious hands, and the wall inclosing it, be rather raised than lowered, that the wild beasts of the forests may be tamed and driven into its sacred enclosures! Thus then, as the theory last considered really curtailed and wronged the rights of the individual, by the very means by which it may have sincerely hoped to vindicate and restore them, so this doctrine of Oxford actually smothers and destroys the Past, by the profuseness of its affection and the warmth of its embrace.

There is, however, another objection to the Puseyite theory

of the Rule of Faith, also derived from its own concessions. It very justly contends for *the divine nature of the Church*. In this we are heartily ready to unite with another in taking Oxford by the hand, and fearlessly challenge either the ridicule or argument of opponents for doing so. Let them deny this attribute of the "kingdom of heaven" in its earthly pilgrimage, if they have the courage for it. The doctrine is a rock of hope and joy beneath our feet, and mocks derision or assault! But if Oxford really believes this, why not be consistent with itself in its belief? Is it the Church of the first four centuries only, that is divine? And was the enlightening and guiding presence of her Head withdrawn from her thenceforward? This will certainly not be for a moment pretended. But if it is admitted that her divine nature has been preserved and perpetuated through all succeeding ages down to the present, why not respect this fact in our theory of the Rule of Faith? The primitive Church nowhere claims the exclusive right of determining finally all matters of faith and of doctrine, and Oxford acts without authority or consistency in conceding it. Her dogma, therefore, cannot receive our assent.*

IV. Let us then turn in conclusion to a brief consideration of what may be termed *the evangelical doctrine upon our subject*. This title is given to it because it will be found, as is hoped, at least, to be *the view which the true Church has always maintained, either in theory or practice, against the errors represented by the false systems which have been noticed*.

Before making a formal statement of this doctrine, we will indicate the several facts or arguments upon which it rests—the steps by which it is reached.

1. The first is, that *the Bible was never given to be the only authoritative guide and directory for the individual Christian*. It has been so common to maintain the opposite of this, by some of the warmest and sincerest defenders of evangelical protestantism against the aggressions of Popery and Infidelity, that the assertion made may startle some of our friends. Others may use it for a sort of Treves coat, to create a panic with. But so long

* See Note, *ante* p. 363.

as we have the Bible itself, and their own ecclesiastical institutions and practice on our side in making it, there is not much need for fear. From the one, then, we learn that the preaching of the gospel by the Church, and its administration of the sacraments, and execution of discipline, are commended to those, and enjoined upon those, who could not possibly have been in possession of the sacred word. The Saviour's charge to the Apostles and the seventy, the Apostles' charges to such as they again ordained for the work of the ministry, and the directions of inspired epistles to Timothy, Titus, and established churches, all are indisputable proofs of this.* Adding now to this, the fact that the most *republican church societies* always have acted in agreement with these directions, and exercised their authority in accordance, indeed, with their convictions of Bible teaching, *but still in accordance with their convictions, and not those of any one* who might happen to fall under their judgment, our assertion will surely not be so hastily denounced. Nay, the more Divine we regard the sacred Oracles, and the profounder the reverence we pay to their pure and exalted Source, the more ready will we be to pay deference to their explicit teachings upon this very point.

2. Another fact to be considered here, is, that *the Church is as truly divine as the Divine Word*. This again, we fear, is a position which may awaken dislike and murmuring. For, however willing professed believers may be to wake up the harmonies of the timbrel and the harp, and chime in with their own voices, in singing sweet songs in praise of Zion, and "speaking together in psalms and hymns," all manner of pleasant things about her celestial beauties, and divine attire, there is certainly a growing disposition in our day, and on the part of some, to let the matter rest with soft sounds. To such it may seem startling that it should be claimed that the Church is as really divine as the revealed Word. But why should we refuse to admit this? Is the Church a human institution, devised and framed by men? Is her life a merely human and earthly product? Is not her

* See besides other passages—Matth. xviii. 15; Acts xv. 1; I. Cor. v. 4-6; Gal. vi. 1; II. Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15; II. Tim. ii. 2; Titus iii. 10; Rev. ii. 2.

head a divine Head? Is not her spirit a divine Spirit? Are not her doctrines (as they were proclaimed before a syllable of them was recorded) divine doctrines? Are not her sacraments and rites of worship all from the same source? Are not her members divinely called and divinely renewed, and temples in which the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell? Is she not continually pervaded, in every artery and vein, in heart, and thought, and muscle, by the presence of Him who hath promised to be with her always, even to the end of the world? Is she, finally, not the Kingdom of God, of Heaven, of Christ? Can we say more than this of the Sacred Oracles?

We often hear it said, the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible, is proven by such and such outward and inward evidences. And are there not similar evidences in favor of the Church? Suppose a man who had heard nothing of either, should be called upon to examine the claims of the latter, without having the Bible to guide him, would he not be able to find such proofs—or could they not be pointed out to him with equal force and clearness, as those existing in favor of the divine origin of the word? It is not denied that there are mysteries and difficulties here. But neither will the existence of both in the other case, be disputed.

This is not the place, however, even if there were room and time, for a lengthy argument in vindication of the divine nature of the Christian Church. We simply wished to state the fact, and show that the statement had a good foundation. The inference from this fact, as to *the combined claims* of the Church and the Bible, will easily suggest itself.

3. A third fact in the settlement of our subject is, that *the Church is an animate body, a living organism, in which the several united parts, have mutual rights and duties, owed from and to each other, all separately considered, being subject to the whole.* If it were necessary to fortify this assertion, with reasons additional to those presented in proof of the Bible's not being the only guide, the Divine Word and the practice of the Church, might be made to furnish pages of testimony. The organization, constitutions, creeds, confessions, worship, and discipline of all regular Christian denominations, are based ultimately in this

fact, whether it be appealed to in their favor or not. Schism is no sin without it. Sectarists may plead everything in their favor apart from it. The fact is more real and necessary, if that be at all possible, than the living union and subordination of the several parts of the body to each other, which in the absence of any thing stronger, the Apostle uses as a fit figure of the constitution of the Church.

4. The last general fact bearing upon this subject is, that whilst the *Christian religion* is explicit and strict in defining and requiring assent to certain essentials in doctrine and practice, *it reduces these essentials to few in number, and allows free scope for Christian liberty and charity.* Whether this fact is acceded to or rejected by the reader, we are persuaded that it has been the bane of the Church, to disregard it. Ecclesiastical demagogues, fixing an ambitious eye upon some high seat among their brethren, have succeeded in multiplying and in hardening their chains of spiritual bondage, by persuading them to tear loose from the few silken cords by which the Church would fain have held them within safe limits. Thus whilst they were professedly defending themselves against the creed they had forsaken, they were really building up prison-walls for their own closer confinement. The effects of the spread of this selfish spirit, are seen all around, and occasion much grief, and yet, are only what must ever be expected from a departure from the true policy of our Religion. This spirit, too, is made to be its own tormentor. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." How many schisms might have been healed in their incipient fomentations, but for the oversight of this fact! How much contention, and debate, and ecclesiastical warfare, and bitter bickering amongst believers, might have been wholly shunned!

As to its more immediate bearing upon our present question, the proper consideration of this fact would have saved much trouble and dispute. It teaches us in how far we can have and ought to seek a Rule of Faith, and defines its proper limits. And it exposes the mistake of those who, in inquiring after one, desire a Rule by which they may demand implicit assent to all the peculiar little lights and shades which may distinguish their particular draft of the Christian Religion; and who, without, perhaps, in

every case, being aware of it, would only enforce their demand the more urgently, by pressing *the Bible only* into their special service! The bad company into which others may appear to fall, by the views they advocate, excites in them sincere abhorrence and pity. The pie-bald unbelieving crew which leads their van, inspires no dread or shame!

5. Taking these general facts together, and summing up their import, we shall find that the Christian Religion lays down the *combined testimony of the Word and the Church, past, present, and to come, to all fundamental doctrines, and essential ordinances, as the only true rule of faith.* To these all men are bound, on pain of eternal exclusion from all the privileges and blessings of the Church, here and hereafter, to yield hearty faith and support. And with reference to all things, not defined by these, all men are left to the upright exercise of their own judgment, enlightened by the faithful use of all the means of knowledge within their reach.

We have set forth and advocated this doctrine, as well as we could within such narrow limits, with the greater freedom and confidence, not because it was conceived to be something "new under the sun," or under the imagination that we were proclaiming a mystery hitherto hid from the heart of the Church, but directly under a contrary conviction. For we are fully persuaded, as has already been affirmed, that, in spite of all conflicting theories upon this subject, the practice of the great body of the true Church, has always been in accordance with the conclusion to which this essay has come.

"*In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.*" We will unite yet, finally, in the fervent prayer of thousands who mourn over the distractions of the Church, that the day may be hastened on when this unity shall be fully realized; when, throughout the whole earth, there shall be "one fold and one Shepherd."

EASTON, PA.

J. H. A. B.

ART. XXII.—CROMWELLIAN CHRISTIANITY.*

It is proposed in the subjoined remarks, to institute an examination into what we have chosen to denominate Cromwellian Christianity. Under this designation, we would have our readers to understand that form of religion, or imitation of religion, as we shall see hereafter, which we find embodied in the person of Oliver Cromwell, Protector of the Commonwealth of England. From the start, therefore, it will be remembered, that we have no particular reference to what is generally called Puritan Christianity. We cannot, by any means, coincide with Carlyle, when he represents Cromwell as the soul and life of Puritanism. Cromwell may have been closely connected with the Puritans during his whole life, and these latter may have coöperated with him in many of his movements, still we do not consider the connection so intimate, as it is represented by the above mentioned critic. Puritanism might have existed and run in pretty much the same channel, if Cromwell had never lived, though it is not likely that Cromwell could have flourished, had there been no Puritanism. If our conceptions of Puritanism are correct, there is a fundamental difference between the one and the other. In the Protestant world, at least, there is no longer any doubt respecting the evangelical character of the ancient Puritans. Their names have been long ago recorded among the excellent of the earth, and their memories have been embalmed in the hearts of Christians in all parts of the world. They have left behind them a history of trials and tribulations for the cause of humanity, replete with edification to succeeding ages. Their martyrdoms are of as pure and elevated a character as have been offered anywhere at the shrine of Truth; their works, which do follow them, will endure when the monuments of the Pharaohs, and the trophies of art, shall have crumbled into dust. Their wood, hay and stubble will, doubtless, be consumed by the devouring element of time, but only that the durable material of their building may be brought more clearly to view. Thus much, however, cannot be said of Cromwellianism. Two

* Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with elucidations, by Thomas Carlyle. New York, 1847.

The Protector: A Vindication, by J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, D. D. New York, 1847.

centuries have passed away, and its claims to a Christian character have not as yet been established. Its memory had been consigned to eternal ignominy, had it not at last awakened the sympathies of two of the most influential writers in Protestant Christendom—Carlyle in the literary, and D'Aubigné in the religious world. The weight of these two names when employed on the side of Justice and Truth, may be considered sufficient to resist any attacks made against an injured man; and Cromwell, if he were now alive, would have no reason to complain that wit and genius had all combined to hold his memory in execration, but on the contrary, to rejoice that the world is, at length, prepared to do him justice, whatever its decision is destined to be.

With reference to the office which Carlyle has performed, it is not our intention here to dispute or object. He certainly deserves our warmest thanks for his Herculean task, "for fishing up authentic utterances of the man Oliver, from foul Lethean quagmires, where they lay buried." As far as we can judge, he has successfully proved that "Stupidity" and "Dryasdust," favorite terms of his, have heretofore combined to denounce one of the greatest benefactors of the English nation: that Cromwell completely cut the sinews of Popery in England, and forever settled the question whether Protestantism should be established there on an impregnable basis, or yield at last to the intrigues of the Jesuits. Whilst Protestantism was struggling for a political existence on the continent, England was still storm-tost, and veering from Protestantism on the one hand, to Popery on the other. Queen Elizabeth did not establish Protestantism so immovably as she supposed. It was destined for Cromwell to complete what she had commenced. Popery was made, not only in England, but also on the Continent, to quail at the name of the Protector. If, then, the preëminence of England, in the old world, be owing to her Protestant faith, it is owing more, perhaps, to the policy of Cromwell, than to any other instrumentality, that Protestantism there found a home.

With the appearance of Carlyle's work on Cromwell, we believe, that the tribunal of history is solemnly invoked to review her former decisions, and to render a new one, that will be more in accordance with the dictates of truth and an enlightened age. As a consequence, we may expect the historic literature of England, to be revolutionized and to be written over again. It is more particularly, however, with the *inference*, which D'Aubigné has drawn from the perform-

ance of Carlyle, that Cromwellianism is Christianity, that we have here to do. We are disposed to honor the warrior and the statesman, whilst we are not able to award him the honored name of the Christian.

It must be admitted that many of our opinions on the most important matters, are mere prejudices, imbibed from the age in which we live, or inherited from former times. On this account it is extremely difficult to decide respecting the character of such an individual as Cromwell, from the mere impression which the facts of his life are calculated to make upon our minds. But every person possesses the remnant of a moral taste, that experiences a sensation of pleasure when confronted with moral beauty. Let this test be applied to the history of Cromwell, and what is the result? Is it the same as that which we experience in gazing at the Reformers, through D'Aubigné's graphic representations? The heroes of the Reformation awaken our sympathies for man, and invest human destiny with a dignity and glory of which we had no previous conception. The mind as it passes from scene to scene of that spirit-stirring drama, is elevated above the sphere of passion, and feels a kindred glow for all that is great and good in our common history. We feel ourselves involuntarily attracted to the cause of Freedom, Humanity and the Gospel, and prompted by an inward inspiration, we would descend ourselves into the battle-field, where Light and Darkness are disputing the ground. Can the history of the English Commonwealth thus enlist our affections, even when its darker side is left out of view, as is sedulously done in D'Aubigné's life of Cromwell? Has the light which has been shed upon the life of Cromwell, for the last two centuries, created so warm an impression in its favor?

But the subject is one of importance and will not admit of being disposed of thus summarily. Let us endeavor to gain some idea of a pure Christianity, and then contrast it with its Cromwellian surrogate. If Christianity be anything at all, it is something more than a creed, a confession, or the triumph of a party. It is properly a new and spiritual creation. It is the same power which in the beginning called forth a world of created beings, and animated them with life, and form, and beauty. It is something more fundamental than any activity which is witnessed in the world of history or nature; it is the unity in which all finite beings are reconciled, and made to stand in their proper relations. Apart from such a living

connection with Christ, the world is still a chaos, or like a vessel loosened from its mooring, lost by the wild, tempestous wave. But Christianity is a thing of nought, until man becomes conscious of it, and awakes to a sense of its power over himself and the world. It then becomes the law of his being, imbedded in the depth of his inmost soul, infusing life and health through his entire frame.— When an individual experiences such an inward consciousness of the vital character of religion, he is said to possess faith in the proper sense, which with propriety is distinguished by theologians from mere knowledge. A clear view of the spiritual nature of Christianity, therefore, must in the nature of things produce a conviction of its capacity to penetrate every department of life. It is felt that this may be effected without the destruction of the object it seeks to subdue. It possesses a power to purify the world as it is, with its infinite variety of languages, customs, governments, and degrees of culture. It can thrive under an absolute monarchy, as well as under a free republic. Sin being its only opponent, it asserts a sort of divine authority for the constitution of the world at a given time. It says, honor the kings, whether he be a Nero or a Trajan. It never regards the world as absolutely the best, which the Divine mind could produce, but the best for man in his present condition. As the prison is the best place for the criminal, so the circumstances, favorable or unfavorable, with which he is surrounded, are the best for man as a sinner. The world changes and improves, as the spiritual condition of man is elevated; but such changes must not precede the internal change, as the radical would have it, but are always found to succeed it as a necessary result. The mild genius of Christianity on this account does not ask for the fire and sword to further its progress. It possesses a power which renders these superfluous, and every one who possesses it must be conscious of it, for he is taught of God. When individuals or ages then are found to put confidence in human resources, in an arm of flesh, we may reasonably conclude that they have no higher resort or hope.

Let us now apply the above remarks to the case in hand. Do we meet with such a confidence in the divine power of Christianity, as to render violence unnecessary? No doubt but that Cromwell was under the evangelical spirit of his times. But how was his zeal tempered by faith in the living energy of the divine word? We shall seek in vain for this *sine qua non*, when Cromwell is excited to activity. His army and sword were in his estimation better

adapted to execute his ends than prayer or argument. With Cromwell, the Protestant faith was endangered by the reigning monarch, whose influence must first be curtailed, and whose life was at length sacrificed for the cause of Truth! or as he very sincerely no doubt thought, for the cause of God! In the next place, the parliament, which took the place and power of the king, seemed to stand in the way of the gospel, and this must necessarily be dissolved to make way for the army, to do the work of the Lord more faithfully. At length, however, the army itself in his view, was insufficient to finish the work so auspiciously commenced, and he begins to think that the whole protestant movement must be centered in his own person. Here it will be remembered, that we are not discussing the expediency or inexpediency of his political measures; they may have been justifiable or unjustifiable in a political point of view. But what are we to think of the Christianity which seeks to extend itself by the overthrow of an ancient constitution—the freest of the age, by the death of the sovereign, by the dissolution of the law-making-power, and by the concentration of all power within itself? When further, the progress of religion is set forth as the ruling motive—the grand inducement for such sudden and extensive changes? Is there faith here in Christianity as a grain of mustard seed? Or is it not a practical denial of Christ, and an implied unbelief in the purifying power of the Truth?

The spirit of the age might be plead as extenuating the matter, and doubtless the mere faults of an individual's piety may often be bolstered upon his age or associations. But such a plea is not of place, when the question has reference to the essentials of religion, and such is the issue which is made above. But let the objection have its weight. It will be admitted that Luther lived in a less enlightened age than Cromwell,—and yet we find him reposing the utmost confidence in the word of God to accomplish its ends. The elements of strife were present in Germany, and it would have required but little excitement to produce the explosion, which took place a century after, still he clings with all his soul to the unadulterated word of God, as the power which was to bring order and subordination amidst the general uproar. D'Aubigné himself in his *History* remarks of this, as a peculiar excellence in the Reformer's piety, that he did not wish to further the Reformation by arms, but by the simple preaching of the Gospel; but it excites no horror in the historian, when a contrary spirit is manifested by Cromwell.

This comparison might be considered unfair, as their circumstances differed so widely. Let us employ one that may be considered more equitable. The ancient kingdom of Israel was at one time in a condition similar to that of England at the time of Charles I. The king was unpopular, and was known to be wicked and forsaken of heaven. A youth, the son-in-law of the king, enjoyed the affections of the people, and it was, moreover, a general impression, that he was to be the future king—that he possessed the necessary talents to manage the affairs of the state. With all these circumstances in his favor, with abundant opportunities to destroy the king, and to seize the reins of government, solicited as he was on all hands by his followers, David was the last to commit an act of violence to Saul anointed of heaven to be king. He rather endured privations and sufferings, until Providence should open the way for the realization of the divine promise, nor have succeeding times been able to impugn his motives for thus conducting himself. Will centuries yet to come place the Protector on the same platform with the king of Israel?

It has been said that Cromwell was influenced by the evangelic spirit of his times: much more so, perhaps, than has hitherto been supposed. Previous to his introduction to public life, he lived many years in private, apparently absorbed in devotion, to the neglect, it is said, of his private affairs. In his letters, his spirit seems to be glowing for the progress of what he regarded as the pure faith. If his own accounts are true, of which we have no reason to entertain any doubt, he offered up numerous and fervent prayers for the prosperity of the Protestant faith, and the downfall of antichrist. Even amid the din of the camp, he could wield theological arguments against the Scotch clergy, represented by Carlyle as the severest reprimand they have ever received. But these concessions will only serve to divest him of the character of arch-hypocrite, under which he has been made so frequently to appear. Further than this, they can be of no force, except to place him among a class of individuals who have too much Christianity to be classed entirely with the world, and too much of the world to be placed on the side of Christianity. Such a rank is not an arbitrary one. It is the same which many of a congenial spirit with him, often regarded as champions of Christianity, are beginning to occupy. It is more and more felt that Christianity recognizes no heroes, except such as a Paul, a Luther, a Martyn, who forsaking all they have, and renouncing all

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confidence in the flesh, seek to regenerate the world by the Everlasting Word; that a Constantine, a Gustavus Adolphus, a Henry IV., have no claims to a Christian character, based merely upon their Christian policy or their Christian warfare, and if they are to be canonized at all, their merits must be founded upon different considerations entirely. Geologists inform us that the skeletons of huge, misshapen monsters have been dug from the earth, so unlike the present races of animals, that it is difficult to decide, whether they belong to the present, or are the remnants of a former world. We suppose that the position of Cromwell and others like him, with reference to Christianity, is somewhat similar to that of these animal giants in reference to the present order of things. Whether they belong to the Christian world, or are entirely exterior to it, at all events they occupy the dark and isolated position of the mammoth, the megalosaurus, and the iguanodon in the natural world, which fortunately for us have become extinct.

The character which we have been discussing is very important, owing to its bearings upon modern times. Our most enlightened political institutions took their rise in the seventeenth century, and hence for ages to come, the Cromwellian period will engage the study of the scholar and the Christian. How important then that the literature of that time should be pure and according to truth! If Cromwell is to be regarded in the light of a pure and elevated Christian, his example will be, and it ought to be imitated. But how direful the consequences, if this opinion be founded on error! It was Achilles, the hero of Homer's song, who formed the character of Alexander, whilst the hero of Macedon became the exemplar of Charles XII., king of Sweden, and justly styled the madman. But would we desire another Cromwell? Then let us cultivate a pure literature of Cromwell, and our circumstances most likely will never become so straitened, as to render his presence in our midst necessary or desirable.

But Cromwellian Christianity has its imitations, affinities in our days already, as it has had in all ages of the Church. There is a species of Christianity now abroad in our land, that has all the zeal of a Cromwell himself, but does not seem to possess any clearer consciousness of the divine power of Christianity than its prototype. We notice a manifest impatience among many with the regular developments of Providence in bringing about its ends, and an apparent forgetfulness that the gospel works as leaven, in the improve-

ment and refinement of the human race. Owing to the fearfully intense activities now at work, the improvement of society is no longer permitted to be carried on as a regular growth, but must necessarily be hastened by a kind of high-steam pressure. Human appliances, often carried to violence, are employed without regard to the hidden principles of life, that are enfolding themselves in society, and bidding fair to yield an abundant crop. The sword has not as yet been unsheathed, and standing armies have not as yet been summoned as a backing to argument and reason, but how often has it been attempted to coerce public opinion, and employ it as a rod! How much of the thinking of our days is performed by voluntary associations! The most marked form, perhaps, which Cromwellianism has assumed in our days is represented to us in *modern abolitionism*, that is, the abolitionism of the extreme *left side*. Here we meet with Cromwellian zeal and impatience in abundance, and at the same time a practical denial of a vital Christianity. Our precious institutions, the freest and the best which the world has witnessed, are too corrupt to embody their ideals of perfection. Changes in the constitution, the dissolution of the Union, or if it must be, steel itself, alone can realize their views of the kingdom of God. According to these chivalrous reformers, we may wait till the day of doom for a better era, if we must rely upon the mere preaching of the fundamentals of Christianity. If Cromwell were permitted to revisit our earth, and to settle in America, it is not unlikely that he would know where to find sympathy, and how to turn our distractions to account. Happy is it for America that her military characters, know how to enjoy their honors, and to cultivate the arts of peace.

SMITHSBURG, MD.

T. A.

ART. XXIII.—THE CLASSIS OF MERCERSBURG.

THIS body held its annual meeting lately in Greencastle. In some respects, it may be considered one of the most important

ecclesiastical occasions in the history of the church to which it belongs. The meeting was full. The best spirit prevailed among its members. Less time than usual was lost on the dull formalities of mere outward business, and more room in consequence allowed for strictly church transactions. Questions of deep theological interest were brought forward for discussion, not in any cold abstract view, but under the pressure of the most direct and urgent practical want. These discussions were conducted with unusual earnestness and animation, and no small amount of spiritual ability; while, at the same time, the zeal to which they gave rise, was happily tempered and governed by the true spirit of Christian charity and peace. We know not that we ever attended an ecclesiastical meeting, in which what seems to us to be the proper idea of such an occasion, might be said to have been, on the whole, better sustained. Among other good things, the Classis resolved, with the help of God, to carry up its subscription towards the endowment of the Theological Seminary, to the mark of at least *Ten Thousand Dollars*. More than half of this sum had been secured within its bounds previously; under the reasonable expectation that the other parts of the church would have been stimulated by such noble example to come up also, with a moiety at least of the same liberality, to the completion of the work; in which case the endowment would have been long since out of the way, and the Seminary placed on a sure and firm foundation. By some strange fatality, however, the example seems rather to have worked just the other way; some of the Classes even, of which we might have hoped better things, making use of it, apparently, as a reason for sitting still and doing almost nothing. All this formed no inconsiderable temptation to anger as well as discouragement. Happily, however, this temptation was surmounted, and sorrow became tributary, by the grace of God, to the sacred interest of piety and love. The Classis fell back on the vast solemnity of the cause at stake; counted the cost as in the presence of God; and calmly concluded to shoulder again its own full proportion, and more, of all that still remained to be done, as though it had done nothing before, trusting in God, by such "coals of fire," to move finally the tardy energies of the church at large, to some corresponding zeal. In-

deed the feeling seemed to be, in the end, that if it were found *necessary*, the Classis would even dare, in God's name, to shoulder, single-handed and alone, the entire work, so far as it remains still incomplete. No such necessity, however, is likely to exist. The action which has since taken place on the part of the other Classes, may be taken as a full guaranty that the endowment will now be consummated by the church as a body. Never before has there appeared so much union of mind, and determination of will, and consciousness of strength, in the body at large. All this, as carrying direct respect to the institutions at Mercersburg, is highly encouraging and full of significance. It shows that they are *not* at war with the true genius and spirit of the German Church; that they have not led the way within it to discord and disunion; that in proportion precisely as their real character is understood, they find a responsive chord of sympathy and love and truth through the whole length and breadth of its communion. Such a testimony, coming in such form, is well entitled to consideration, and ought not to pass without grateful notice.

Our object, however, in referring to the Classis of Mercersburg, is not merely nor mainly to bring into view the interesting fact now mentioned. The whole action of the Classis, at its last meeting, deserves to be commemorated, as forming a significant advance in the direction of a sound and healthy church consciousness, in this particular section of our Reformed Zion. As illustrative of this general fact, we note particularly two very important results, which were reached with great unanimity after the most full and earnest discussion; namely, the rejection of the Albright ordination as invalid, and the full affirmation of the old catechetical system, as the true and only legitimate order of the church, in opposition to the theory and fashion of religion, by which in modern times it has been so generally brought into disuse, or turned into an idle form.

The first question came up, in connection with an application from a most worthy and pious minister of the Albright connection, to be taken under the care of the Classis as a candidate for ordination in the German Reformed Church. The request in such form could not, of course, relieve the Classis itself from the

responsibility of deciding either for or against the validity of his ordination as it stood before, and so indirectly, for or against the right of that body to be recognized as a part of the true Christian Church. This was felt very properly to be a most momentous and solemn issue; and much was urged, with great plausibility and force, in favor of a comprehension of this sect in the general Protestant Church, and against any action in this case which must imply the contrary. The Albright body, it was said, must be allowed to include in it some true piety; Christ, we may trust, will own many who belong to it for his own dear people; the doctrines of grace are acknowledged in it, the authority of the Bible, justification by faith, the influences of the Spirit, &c.; and how should we then, without a breach of charity, deliberately proceed to unchurch them as a sect in the presence of the whole world? Must we not, to be consistent, unchurch also other sects? And how in the end could we assert the validity of any Protestant ordination at all, over against the exclusive claims of the Church of Rome? Must we not maintain the universal priesthood of Christians, as the only ground on which to justify the Reformation; and why should not this universal priesthood be of as much avail to legitimate the ministry of Jacob Albright and his successors, as it is acknowledged to be in favor of Luther and Zuingli and Melancthon and Calvin? All this was earnestly and powerfully pleaded, on the floor of Classis. On the other side, however, it was urged, that if the Church be a divine fact, schism must be also a most real and sore evil, which we are bound to make account of just as much as we make account of heresy; that in such case, we have nothing to do with charity or courtesy, but are called in the fear of God to bear manful testimony to the truth; that if it be a solemn thing to unchurch a body of professing Christians, it is a thing no less solemn, to fling the doors of the Church wide open, and thus virtually turn it into nothing but a word and a name; that in the providence of God, the Classis was here called to face a question, on whose decision the most vast consequences might be found to hang in time to come; that the Albright body never had any call to become a church; that its ministry started from nothing, and was of no force; that it was a solemn duty to bear this testimony to the Albright Breth-

ren themselves, and that to refuse to do so must involve great unfaithfulness to the world generally, encouraging people to make no account of the danger of falling into schism in any way, but rather to take it for granted that all religious connections are alike good and alike safe. Pains were taken, besides, to show that the case of the Reformation was in no proper sense parallel with the rise of this upstart sect; that the universal priesthood of Christians involves not at all the power of starting a new church in every corner and on any occasion; and that Protestantism must be considered a failure outright, if it carry no force in its constitution sufficient to distinguish it here from the universal prostration of all bounds and metes on the side towards the open world.

In the end, an almost unanimous vote was given, with unusual heartfelt solemnity, in favor of the petition for new ordination, and so, as before said, against the validity of the Albright ministry—virtually declaring that body to be no part of the proper Church of Christ. No question was raised in regard to the baptism of the applicant. This had taken place, not among the Albrights, but at an earlier date in the Roman Catholic Church, whose ordinances, notwithstanding the great corruption of that communion, have been regarded as valid by the Protestant Church generally, from the beginning. The vote now mentioned, was taken with only four *non liquets*, and not a single negative. The lay delegates, to a man, and apparently without the least hesitation, gave their voice firmly and fully in its favor.

As to the correctness of the decision, there ought not, we think, to be the least doubt. There might be cases presented, where it would be exceedingly difficult to bring the question of church character to any such practical resolution; but no such difficulty can be allowed to hold in the case here brought into view; unless, indeed, we choose to give up all faith in the divine constitution of the Church, under any view, which would be virtually to dismiss the whole question from the start, as one of no meaning or worth. If the Church be of any force at all outwardly, as an object of faith and trust, and if schism in the old ecclesiastical sense, is to be regarded as still possible, in any shape, it must be plain that such self-constituted upstart bodies as the Albright Brethren, the followers of John Winebrenner, &c., have no right

or title whatever to be recognized as any part of the heavenly corporation. According to its own account of itself, (Rupp's Hist. of Rel. Denom. 2nd edition p. 274ff.) the Sect of the Albrights, (Albrechts-leute,) took its rise about the year 1800, not quite fifty years ago, "in one of the middle free States of America." One Jacob Albrecht, an illiterate man, of obscure origin and connections, became awakened to a sense of his sinful state, and "after a long and very severe struggle, received at last, by faith in the Son of God, the remission of his sins and the spirit of adoption." Gradually he gained notoriety as an exhorter, made disciples, and finally "after a very severe conflict respecting his call to the ministry, commenced travelling as a preacher; in which vocation we are told, God richly blessed his labors, by giving him many souls for his hire. "Having now continually a feeling and tender regard for the Germans of this country, as among them true Christianity was at that time at a very low ebb, and almost extirpated, he united himself in the year 1800, with a number of persons, who by his preaching had been awakened and converted to God, into a Christian society. This is the origin of the Evangelical Association. In the year 1803, this society resolved upon introducing and instituting among and for themselves, an ecclesiastical regulation. Jacob Albright was therefore elected as the presiding elder among them, and duly confirmed by the other preachers, and by their laying on of hands ordained, so as to authorize him to perform all transactions that are necessary for a Christian society, and becoming to an evangelical preacher. They unanimously chose the sacred Scriptures for their guide, &c." How is it possible to recognize such a body, self-originated within the last half century in a corner of Pennsylvania, as part and parcel of the Holy Catholic Church, the mystical one and universal Communion of the Creed, which started in Christ eighteen centuries ago, and against which, we are told, that the gates of hell can never prevail! If Jacob Albright had a right to originate a new church in this way, every pious Tom, Dick and Harry in the land, has a right to do the same thing, and to make himself also, in like style, the fountain and source of a new ministry—provided, only, he can find a few simple disciples to submit themselves to his ghostly authority, and

lay their hands upon him afterwards in confirmation of his commission. Thus in the end, each Christian family might set up for the dignity of a separate Christian denomination, and have its own ministry and sacraments in its own way. It is worse than idle, in any such view, to pretend any faith in the Church at all, as a divine historical institution. We believe in the universal priesthood of Christians, as we believe also in their universal kingdom; but for this very reason, we have no faith in the idea of a particularistic atomistic exercise of any such high function in either case. The priestly power starts in Christ, and from him passes over to his body the Church, to be exercised from its life as a whole, through organs created for this purpose, and not to be snatched away by profane hands for the use of any and every sect, which may take it into its head to set up a separate priesthood and kingdom in its own name. Is it asked then, how we are to justify the Reformation, and vindicate the validity of our Protestant ministry? The answer is short. Not by any outward succession in the case of the ministry, nakedly and separately considered; but certainly not by any theory either, which overthrows the necessity of a true historical succession in the life of the Church, and makes it competent for any body of Christians, under any circumstances, to start an entirely new church. It is the life of the Church as such, the life of the Church as an organic historical whole, which alone can fully legitimate and clothe with power the needful organs of this life, and their necessary functions. If then we must admit some disturbance in the ordinary law of ministerial succession at the Reformation, it does not follow at once that the succession itself for this reason fell to the ground; the true succession lay in the life of the Church as a whole; and if it can be shown that *this* gave birth to the Reformation, it must be allowed to have been sufficient at the same time to make good, in the way of inward reproductive force, any *unavoidable* defect that was found to attend, in this revolution, the outward genealogy of the Protestant ministry. After all, it is the Church, the presence of Christ's life in his Body, which supports the true line of the ministry, and not the line of the ministry that upholds mechanically the being and authority of the Church. On this broad principle, we justify the Reforma-

tion ; It was the product of the old Catholic Church itself ; the central consciousness of the Christian world had been struggling towards it for centuries before ; it was, in the end, the organic outburst plainly of the life of Christianity, as an objective historical whole, which simply laid hold of the Reformers, and brought itself to pass by them as its organs, without any calculation of their own. In no other view can it be successfully defended ; and on this principle, accordingly, we find no difficulty in distinguishing between it and all minor religious revolutions and secessions, that seek to shelter and excuse themselves under its august shadow. Let them show a like necessity for their appearance, in the organic life of the Church as a whole. What a parody on every such imagination, is presented to us in the free and independent rise of the *Evangelische Gemeinschaft*, the self-unchurching brotherhood of Jacob Albright ! Was it the power of Christianity, in its universal organic life, that gave birth to *this* mushroom ? That would be indeed the mountain laboring to produce a mouse. Did the enigma of centuries and ages, which had lain like a heavy burden on the heart of the Church before, come to its magnificent solution finally in this small spiritual phenomenon, the mission of such a man, the creation of such a sect ! There is absurdity in the very thought. The thing rose in a corner ; it had no historical necessity ; it came no one can tell whence, and so it is fast going also, no one can tell whither. There is no room for any rational comparison here with the Reformation ; and so not the least reason for fearing that the honor of this great interest may be brought into jeopardy, by allowing the full truth to be both spoken and acted in so plain a case. Luther was the organ of the Church ; Jacob Albright was the subject of mere private fancy and caprice. No deep, general force, the accumulated world-sense of ages, came to its uncontrollable and necessary outbreak in his person. He had no call to form a religious denomination. His sect is no birth of the Church, but a schismatic denial of its objective historical authority from beginning to end.

In these circumstances, the Classis had no right to shrink from the solemn decision it has been called to make ; as it should have no wish either, now that it is made, to conceal or disguise its true

purport and sense. The action took place, without haste or passion, under the most calm conviction of duty, and in full view of the critical responsibilities involved in it on all sides. In no other way, could true Christian fidelity have been shown towards the Albright Brethren themselves. We owe it to the souls of those who are led away by this delusion, to warn them plainly of their danger. The Church is bound moreover by duty to her own children, not to keep silence in regard to so great an interest. If she have no faith in herself, no power to condemn and abhor schism in any quarter, how can we expect those who are growing up in her bosom, to place any true value on their birthright, or to make any account of her authority? We are sorrowfully and solemnly persuaded, that the unfaithfulness of the Church just here, forms one of the greatest evils under which the Christian world is made to suffer at the present time. A sound church faith, on the part of the Church herself, by which she may be enabled firmly to assert her own *divine* prerogative over against all merely human associations or sects, is necessary to authenticate fully her commission itself, and forms at the same time, an indispensable element in the power of the Christian salvation, which is administered by her hands.

No less important, as regards right church feeling, was the general ground taken by the Classis on the subject of what is called the *system of the catechism*, as it stood in the original practice of the Church. It is generally known, that this had been widely supplanted a few years since, by another system altogether, which for the sake of a name, may be denominated the *method of the anxious bench*; under the influence of which, even the excellent institution of *confirmation* itself, was in danger of losing altogether its meaning and credit. Happily, this tendency has received a check, and it is now common, on all sides, to honor the Catechism again, and observe at least the form of Confirmation. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose all done here which the case requires, by a mere outward transition from the use of the anxious bench to the use of the catechism. All turns at last on distinguishing properly between the inward life and genius of the two systems, which these shibboleths are employed thus outwardly to define. It is quite possible to put away the

bench, and bring in the catechism, and still remain bound altogether to the theory of religion, of which the first only, and not the second, is the natural sign and type. 'The great thing needed, is some true insight into the difference that exists between the two schemes of religion which underlie the different tendencies in question, and an inward return thus, with love and faith, to the "old paths" from which the practice of the Church has so widely swerved. Much was gained in this way, at the last meeting of the Mercersburg Classis, by means of resolutions and discussions brought to bear from various sides on this point. It was encouraging here also, to find, that on a fair understanding of the questions at issue, the judgment of the body, and especially the instinctive sound feeling of the elders *always*, went fully in favor of the old church spirit, and in opposition to the foreign way of thinking, which has been seeking to drive it from its place. It was felt that to shake off the power of that foreign system effectually, something more is necessary than to change a few outward forms, and a few watchword phrases for the lips. The result of all, we trust, has been a general clearer apprehension than before, of the true design and significance of the old Reformed practice; its dependence on the idea of the Church, as a divine organization; its relation to the conception of sacramental grace; a more solemn sense of the real membership of baptized children in Christ's kingdom; and of the duty and privilege of treating and training them accordingly; a much larger faith in the high import of educational religion, the use of the catechism, as a direct preparation for the second sacrament, and the true solemnity of Confirmation as the necessary and proper completion of the holy sacrament of baptism. All this implies, of course, a great deal more than a polite toleration simply of the church system, in the way of appendage only to its unchurchly opposite. That may be taken as the hardest fate of all for this system, when men who have no power to understand it at all, but are completely saturated with the other scheme, pretend, notwithstanding, to tack it externally to their own favorite theory, in the way of compliment merely and condescension. How far this wrong has been carried in our own church, and more still a great deal in the Lutheran, need not here be said.

N.

ART. XXIV.—THE "BEAUTIFUL RIVER."

BY ROB'T P. NEVIN.

I.

There breathes the force of untold eloquence,
O RIVER, in that wondrous voice thou hast!
No sound doth leap to seize the pausing sense,
Or hold, aroused, the slumbering echoes fast
That haunt the cover of thy chambers vast;
And yet thy silence with o'erwhelming power
Doth speak the mysteries of dark centuries past,
By old bequeathment made thy proper dower,
When KINGS controlled, and native PRINCES strode thy shore!

II.

Oh! that, high inspiration won, 'twere mine
To interpret the wild meaning thou dost bear,
And give it utterance with a voice like thine!
Vain wish! The mountain rill that stirs the air
With vaunting song, doth more of import share
Than man may fathom; yet its clamorous boast,
Which solitude e'en owns and answers there,
Abroad upon thy mightier bosom tost,
Without an image left is in oblivion lost.

III.

Strong River! thou of all that God has made
To crown the grandeur of this scene, alone
Maintain'st thy primal glory undecayed!
Lake—moor—hill—forest—mountain reared of stone—
Where are the strength and grace they claimed their own?
Eternal seeming once, thy transience bred
A theme of scorn to feed their mockery's tone;
But now the appointments of their pride are fled,
And time and thou in changeless destiny are wed.

IV.

Thus to forecast the unseen end of Fate,
Would Prescience, erringly yet aiming, strive !
Thus pampered Power, vain in its high estate,
And fixed establishment, assume to live
Unchanged through change ; as though the shocks that rive
The world besides, were impotent to rend
Its flattered rule—thence-sprung derivative !—
Or Revolution, sinew-stripped, could lend
No arm to wield defeat, or shape an altered end !

V.

The old world had its dynasties : they were ;—
Reared monuments to fasten firm their fame ;—
Erected temples, that each distant heir
Thenceforth might prize the grandeur of their name ?—
They were, but only were. New eras came,
New thrones, new empires ; and the old
Lost e'en the memory of their former claim,
Or held it in enigmas darkly told,
A mystery to wonder at, but not unfold.

VI.

And here upon thy shores were kingdoms sprung !
Through spanning cycles of unreckoned date,
Though seeming slenderly their tenure hung,
They reached, o'erliving in bold estimate
The length of lordlier realm, or nobler state.
Coeval with the rise of thine, arose,
Oh, Tiber Queen !—a star, its more than mate—
The LENNAPE'S !*—high towering when the close
Befell, that thence decreed thee Memory's and thy foes'.

* The Lenni Lennape, as their name purports, claim to be the "original men" of the continent. Their territory at the time of the discovery of the New World, lay between the Hudson and Susquehanna rivers, on either shore of the Delaware. They afterwards migrated to the Ohio Valley.

VII.

Like thee they had their mighty—known apart ;
Men famed around the "fires" and in the field,
The proved in speech, the tried in arm and heart,
Whose worth, with honor's zeal, love's faith, to shield,
Down through tradition's channel ran revealed.
And favored bards their victories too have sung,
In anthems through the columned forests pealed,—
Alas ! whose temples, arch by arch o'erflung,
May ring response no more, like as of old they rung !

VIII.

The grand-sire with the youth, at even-tide,
Intent to shape aright his pliant prime
For manhood meet, hath ta'en him at his side,
And from examples of the ancient time,
Portrayed the picture of a life sublime :
Hath decked his scalp-tuft with an eagle's plume,
Plucked from his own brow, marked with the groove and rime,
The seal of valor stamped in age's room,—
And left its story and its lesson with the 'loom.

IX.

Dark maids by moonlight in the shadowy wold,
The fervor of a suitor's lips have felt
In tones heroic, nor in dalliance, told.
His fairest plea the trophies in his belt :
His valued boast the stroke his fathers dealt.
In tale historic with ancestral pride,
Rehearsed how oft a vanquished foe had knelt ;
What arm compelled—whose fate the Braves that died,—
Made these his cause—and so the warrior wooed his bride.

X.

Such the devoir of Gratitude to Worth.
And what superior tribute, held or spent,

Could crave ambition from the wealth of earth?—
The quarry's prize by Genius shaped, and lent
To fill a niche, or rear a monument?—
The lettered page—the pictured woof of art?
Cold mockeries, whose fashioned grace is meant
To serve the framer's, not the subject's part;
When Taste may sate its longing—never move the Heart.

XI.

In their rude sepulchres the dead are roomed!
The tiller's share hath torn the generous sod
Sheltering their sleep; and o'er their bones inhumed,
Unweeting and unheeding feet have trod:—
Profaned and trampled they, whose name have awed
A peopled continent! What then?—Their dust
Was dust—the rest beyond is known to God.
Living their race lived they, in sainted trust,
And passing passed—even as others have, and must!

XII.

And who, when all he loved, or wished to love
Of kind and country, friends and home, are gone,
His hearth-stone cold—mute woodland, glen and grove,
Where childhood's laughter with its leaping tone
Had burst, and manhood's eloquence had flown;
Oh, who would longer live, nor choose to fade,
A nameless thing, unpillared and unknown,
Than dwell, beyond his race's durance stayed,
A foeman's boast—a vanquisher's exultance made!

XIII.

Roll on, O River! in thy power and pride!
Thy voice hath spoken, and its solemn peal
Hath reached my soul. Here, bending o'er thy tide,
Devout Emotion, worshipping, would kneel,
And from the fervor thou hast given to well,

Pour out its offering—this bosom here

Yield all of life's vain longing it may feel,

Planning alone the purer end to bear—

Like thine, heaven's smile to win—its blessed brightness wear.

PITTSBURGH, May, 1849.

ART. XXV.—THE SAINTED DEAD.

HEAVEN; or An Earnest and Scriptural Inquiry into the abode of the Sainted Dead. By the *Rev. H. Harbaugh*. Philadelphia: William S. Young. 1849. pp. 245. 12mo.

A very popularly written volume on a popular and interesting theme; which needs only to be known generally, we think, to find many readers, and which, when it is seriously read, can hardly fail to leave behind it a salutary religious impression. "For several years," the author tells us, "my mind has been specially directed towards the heavenly world. In gathering information on this interesting subject, I was surprised to find that so little had been written directly on it. I have also found, since my own mind has been employed on this subject, that there are many to whom it has been a subject of like interest, and who eagerly read what professes to throw light upon it. I have therefore ventured to offer this volume as a contribution to this department of pious inquiry, hoping that the reading of it may be as much blest to the hearts of those who read it, as I feel the writing of it to have been to me. Any book that will serve, in any degree, to draw the realities of the eternal world, especially of heaven, nearer to us, is not written and read in vain." The work, of course, is more practical than philosophical, designed to serve

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the purposes of believing piety rather than to minister food for curious speculation. At the same time, the writer shows himself to be possessed of a good deal more learning and philosophy too, than we meet with in many who put forward much larger pretensions in this form. Mr. Harbaugh is constitutionally a thinker, and not a mere dull retailer of other men's thoughts. The habits of the preacher and the pastor, both vocations in which he is known to excel, are not allowed with him to mar the sympathies and affinities of the scholar; and the present production, in this view, is certainly very creditable to his literary character and powers, and carries in it also good augury for the time to come. The author has a certain advantage for the *popular* discussion of the subject he has here taken in hand, in his temperament and age. The first includes a broad dash of mysticism; to the second he is indebted for an exuberance of imagination, which riper age will be apt considerably to tame; both qualifications well suited to help the mind forward, in such an excursion as is here made, over the confines of time and sense, into the world of unseen mystery that lies beyond. There is nothing dark, however, nor particularly transcendental, in the style of the work. Its poetry is not prose run mad, or mounted on stilts into the region of clouds, but clear sensible thought and speech, which as a general thing all sorts of readers may readily enough comprehend. Mr. Harbaugh uses a pen, which is at once both fluent and correct.

Is Heaven a *Place*? *Where* is it located? Do the saints pass into it *immediately* at their death? In what *correspondence* is it to be regarded as standing with earth?—These are the great cardinal questions, on which is made to hinge both the contents and plan of the book. In order to assert and make clear what is held to be the truth, in each case, as taught in the Bible, an examination is taken of the different theories and opinions that come into conflict with what is thus approved, for the purpose of setting them aside. This opens a broad free field for discussion, with full opportunity for bringing into view a good deal of curious and interesting matter, which is well adapted to illustrate the difficult bearings and connections of the general subject.

We have been requested by the amiable and excellent author

himself, to exercise our critical censorship on his work without mercy; under the supposition, as it would seem, that the view especially which it takes of the state of the dead, between death and the resurrection, might not be found to suit our catholic theology; with which, at the same time, the reigning tone of the work may be said fully to accord, especially in the importance it attaches to the christological fact as the central ground of all true religion. On close inspection, however, we find no such room for disagreement here, as we were at first led to expect and fear. We should be very sorry certainly, to stickle for the notion of an intermediate *place*, the conception of a definite fixed locality in the centre of the earth or elsewhere for the outward comprehension of the departed dead; and still more so, to contend for any such conception, as excluding the idea of paradise on the one hand, and of hell on the other, in the case of the righteous and the wicked. The old Jewish representation of Sheol and Hades, must be regarded of course as an outward picture or symbol of the truth in this case, and not as its very form. It is only with the inward and necessary substance of what it expresses as presented to us in the Bible, that the christian faith is properly concerned. This is the fact of an intermediate *state*; the question of *place* is one of comparative insignificance, in regard to which it is perhaps not possible to come to any satisfactory conclusion; the question of *state*, it seems to us, we have no right to be in doubt about, or to decide except in one way. The Scriptures teach a middle state, from beginning to end. It is explicitly affirmed in the Creed. It has ever been held, as a necessary part of the Christian faith, by the Church Catholic. It enters essentially into the whole scheme of Christianity, and cannot be torn from it without marring and spoiling its structure throughout. Christianity knows nothing of an abstract redemption for the soul separately considered, and makes no account of the so called immortality of the soul apart from the body. Its salvation is for the *man*, whose nature stands in the union of both. It requires the resurrection accordingly to consummate its own process; this reaches forward from the start to such full triumph over death, and can never be counted complete till it comes to that issue. The period then between death and the resurrection falls within

the process of redemption, (Rom. viii. 23; I. Cor. xi. 23, 51-56; I. Thess. iv. 14,) and not beyond it. It is not in the way of mere pageantry and show, that Christ is to bring the dead saints out of their graves at his second coming; that will be the natural and necessary end of the *life*, which is lodged in them now as the members of his mystical body. To conceive of the Christian redemption as something *done* at death, and all beyond as outward accident and circumstance only belonging to the heavenly state, is necessarily to wrong the whole gospel. It turns our salvation into an abstraction and strips it of its true concrete glory as revealed to us in the Creed. The intermediate state is not the heavenly state, in the full and proper sense, but belongs rather, we must say, to the economy of our present life, the world of mortality *through* which "the saints on earth and all the dead," as one blood ransomed communion, are steadily passing to that higher form of existence, "the glorious liberty of the children of God," as it is to be reached by all together finally through the portals of the resurrection.

But are not the spirits of the saints with Christ, after they leave the body? We reply, they are; and in this respect, the New Testament view of the disembodied state, in the case of the righteous, goes far beyond the idea of Sheol, as it prevails throughout the Old Testament. We may, if we choose, denominate their felicity the happiness of the heavenly world itself, and in such view speak of them as having passed into glory and as now dwelling in paradise. In all this, however, we are bound to make a broad distinction still between their condition and that of the saints after the resurrection. Heaven can not be the same thing, for souls out of the body, and souls carried through this relatively naked stage to the full redemption and liberty that lie beyond. It is the resurrection which winds up the drama of salvation, and opens the way for "the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The intermediate state, even if it be supposed to hold within the same local bounds, can have no common measure with the resurrection state. The two states must form of necessity, two separate and distinct worlds. Sameness of place, in such a case, is of no account.

All this now may be said to be virtually admitted in Mr. Har-

baugh's book itself; although he takes a great deal of pains apparently, to set aside the doctrine of the middle state entirely. It is however, a question of place with him in the end altogether, and not properly a question of state. His object is to make out that the souls of believers do at their death pass into glory; which involves to his mind, an entrance locally into a certain fixed region called heaven, the same that is to be occupied by saints after the resurrection. But in all this, he simply locates the theatre of the intermediate state in heaven, instead of giving it a locality in the under world, or some where else. The state itself he is still forced to acknowledge and allow. His disembodied spirits exist in heaven on very different terms, from those which hold in the case of the full and proper heavenly life, as it is to be reached after the resurrection. They have no clear sense or apprehension of the realities around them; no full self-consciousness, answerable to their local condition; it is a potential rather than an actual occupancy they have of heaven after all, like that of the present world by the infant still unborn. It is a state "analogous to, but, of course, higher than a state of ordinary sleep, with active dreaming." Nay, farther it is allowed to be, under this form, an inward preparation, "celestial pupilage," for the resurrection life, carrying out and completing the preparation previously begun in the body. "While the saint is in this world, in the body, he becomes conversant with material things, and habituated to them; now, in the other world, in a disembodied state, previous to the resurrection, he will become conversant with and habituated to purely spiritual existence, so that after the resurrection, when soul and body are again united, he will be able to hold converse and communion with either material or immaterial existences at pleasure." But what less, we ask, is all this, than the very idea of the middle state itself, which the author seeks to exclude? Locate it where we please, in hades or in heaven, the fact remains at last substantially the same. The state between death and the resurrection, as it differs widely from our present life, differs widely also from the life that is to follow. It is not heaven itself, in the full sense, as it is to be revealed hereafter; but an undeveloped, relatively embryonic condition, rather, according to this book, in which souls are matured by

inward exercise for that higher order of glory. We find no occasion then, to defend the reality of the intermediate state, against Mr. Harbaugh; for he himself allows it, in language which all must confess to be sufficiently strong.

We think, however, that he obscures the true force and value of the doctrine, by insisting too far on the local identity of the two states which he owns to be so materially different in their interior constitution. Heaven of course involves the conception of *place*; but we have no right to think of it as holding only under such local relations and limitations, in this form, as are found to characterize our present mortal life. The idea of *place* may admit far other modes of relation to it, than any of which it is possible for us now to form a conception. *Place* itself becomes what it is, by the way in which it is occupied and apprehended; a new sense imparted to us, (like sight for instance to the consciousness of a world born blind,) might of itself be sufficient to change our existence, immeasurably more than a translation without it to the most remote part of the universe. So it is quite easy to conceive of the whole theatre and form of our existence undergoing a revolution, first at death and then again at the resurrection, without any vast migration in space after our present fashion of thinking, which nevertheless may involve in each case such a universe of change as no image of any such mere outward migration can even adequately represent. The idea of *state* here is of incomparably more account, than the notion of *place*; for the simple reason that this last must necessarily be conditioned, in its whole real determination, by the powers and capabilities which are comprehended in the first. The Scriptures certainly open to our contemplation thus three states, in the case of man, which are very differently related to our world, while yet they all belong to the same grand process of space and time for which the world serves as a theatre. The idea of this process requires the full triumph of humanity, according to the proper sense of Gen. i, 26; Ps. viii, 5-8, and Heb. ii, 5-10, over all the limitations with which it is called to struggle in the world as it now stands. This end is reached by redemption. Hence a *mortal state*, doomed to sink under the law of sin and death; an *intermediate state*, in which the reign of death continues,

but all is ripening at the same time for the outburst of a higher life; and finally a *resurrection state*, in which this mortal shall put on immortality, and man stand forth as the perfect and last sense of this earth, organically conducted to its own glorious consummation by Him who made it in the beginning for such use. What more the idea of Heaven as introduced by this last state may include, into what new relations and correspondences it may bring its happy inmates with other spheres and climes of God's universe, either immediately or at some subsequent epoch, we know not; the Scriptures shed no clear light on what lies beyond. But so much at all events the idea includes, as related to what lies on this side; Heaven is the true end and issue of the problem which God is conducting to a solution in the world as it now stands, and the very form in which at last the stream of its history is destined to roll the full volume of its sense into the ocean of light, and holiness and love, which it is formed to seek from the beginning.

The doctrine of the intermediate state of course then is no point of curious speculation merely, but a most deeply practical interest for Christian faith. In proportion as it falls out of view, the historical *realness* of the new creation in Christ Jesus is made to suffer in the mind of the Church. A living christology, a quickened sense of the mystery of the Church, must ever require it as a necessary part of its consciousness and hope. It is only an *abstract* Christianity which finds it easy to part with it altogether, or that turns it into a nullity, by erasing all real distinction between the state before the resurrection and the state after it. Such abstraction, however, strips in this way the doctrine of the resurrection itself of its significance, and so far saps the very foundations of the Christian faith.

But the subject is too broad for us, to pretend to take it up here at all in its details. We may find occasion possibly to return to it, as a direct and separate theme, some time hereafter.

Some have an invincible propensity to confound the idea of a middle state with the idea of a probation after death, purgatory, &c. But the two conceptions are by no means the same. The first is taught in the Creed, and we are bound to believe it. The question, whether *any* of the human race will have a probation

extended to them after death, is one which our Church allows us not to meddle with in any positive way. Mr. Harbaugh, if we take his meaning right, consigns the untold millions of the heathen world to hopeless perdition. This, however, is going too far; we have no right to affirm absolutely, one way or the other. Infants, dying such, Mr. Harbaugh of course considers saved, without any such probation as implies the possibility of their being lost. Still he would admit, no doubt, that this salvation must include an evolution of reason and will in a human way; the knowledge of Christ in some way preached or made known; and a free closure, as the old divines say, with the terms of life presented in his person; otherwise all would become magic.

On the subject of the Church, as we have before said, as well as in its whole christological theory, the little volume before us is far enough removed from the abstract spiritualism, which has become so common in our modern divinity. One great object of the writer seems to be indeed, to expel such spirituality of the mere intellect from our minds, and to make us feel that the mystery of the new life, as it is unfolded to us in Christ, is no less real, and concrete and near to the world as it now stands, than are the palpable existences that surrounded us in the sphere of sense.

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ART. XXVI.—MORELL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. BY *J. D. Morell, A. M.*, Author of the *History of Modern Philosophy*, etc. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton. 12mo. pp. 359.

THE author of this work has come recently into favorable notice by his *History of Philosophy*; which is, undoubtedly, the most successful attempt that has yet been made, to exhibit in English form an intelligible outline of the marches and countermarches,

achievements and exploits, of modern mind, in the regions of pure thought. The difficulty with these historical sketches among us generally is, that they are wholly outward and mechanical in their character; the product of a purely empirical reflection, which has never come to understand what speculation means, much less to have any inward sympathy with its processes and wants; and which affects, accordingly to take the size and measure and contents of a system of philosophy, much as some shrewd Yankee understanding, made up of lines and figures, would go about the business of constructing a table of statistics. No wonder that the whole subject should be turned more or less, in this way, into solemn caricature and nonsense; especially, if the case require a transfer of thoughts out of one language over into another, the profound ideas of Kant, for instance, or Schleiermacher, or Hegel, from German over into commensurate and fairly intelligible English. Such translation is, under any circumstances, a most difficult and delicate task; but in the province now before us, the difficulty approaches the character of desperate impossibility. At all events, no power can overcome it, even in part, that does not involve an actual entrance into the world of thought which is to be described, and a living reconstruction of its forms and relations in the life of the reporter. Only as the thoughts are thus truly mastered and made his own, and are brought in this way to force out for themselves a proper utterance and representation in the language he speaks, can it ever be possible for him to mediate at all between them and the thinking of other minds. Such qualification for writing a history of philosophy, Morell must be allowed to possess in a rare degree. He has himself a deeply philosophical mind; feels the necessity and dignity of speculation; owns within himself the authority of a divine call to think. His philosophy has taught him to look with reverence to the thinking of others; he has read and studied much, with living insight into systems and books; he has become widely catholic thus and free, without losing at the same time his own separate independence. No one can charge him with a disposition to undervalue or wrong the claims of English philosophy; he is far enough removed from all blind veneration for what is foreign, whether French or German, as such; while, however, the claims

of such foreign thought, are recognized in full as they ought to be, and made to receive their just tribute of respect. The writer shows himself well at home in the deepest and most abstruse processes of German speculation, and exercises certainly a fine tact and skill in bringing them to proper statement in his own language.

In the work before us, he may be said to break ground in a field, which for this country, as well as England, is still in a great measure new and strange. To many, indeed, the whole subject may seem to be one which we have no right to touch. They can admit a philosophy of sleep, a philosophy of storms, nay, even a philosophy of hats and shoes, but they will hear of no philosophy of religion. The worst of it is, however, in all this case, that a very stubborn theory of religion is found to underlie notwithstanding, the whole judgment which it represents; only this is not the fruit of any true reflection or inquiry, but the product altogether of blind accident and tradition. Those who think least about the nature of religion, are apt to be most *notional* in their way of apprehending it, and most stiff at the same time, in contending for their own poor scheme of notions as identical with the very truth of the Bible itself. It is just the tyranny of such miserable *unphilosophy*, affecting on all sides to be the deepest and last sense of divine things, which makes it in the highest degree desirable and necessary to introduce into the sphere of Christianity the emancipating power of a philosophy of religion in its true sense. The general object then of this work of Morell, is one which we highly approve. The inquiries here brought into view, as lying at the threshold of all sound theology and opening the way to a properly free and manly christian life, are at this time, especially, most worthy of general serious attention. It is high time, that we should aim at something deeper in regard to them, than the oracular off-hand divinity of our common religious newspapers. It is high time, that the tyranny of men who will neither think themselves, nor allow others to think, should be resisted, and, if possible, brought to an end. *Protestantism* is a holy thing against all such dead traditional authority, whether in the Church of Rome or on the outside of it; an authority, which takes God's truth into its own keeping as an outward ab-

straction and deposit, and so turns the whole into a treadmill of notions, in whose rotatory track the universal world must be forced to move, if possible, to the end of the ages.

We do not mean, of course, to make ourselves responsible here, in any way, for Morell's system of thoughts as a whole. There are positions in his book, which we are by no means prepared to endorse and accept as our own. Altogether it makes too small account of Christian doctrine, and is not sufficiently *realistic* and concrete in its view of the Church. But the value of such a work does not turn exactly on the full orthodoxy of its contents, or on their full agreement rather with any current creed by which they may happen to be tried. There are writers, whose very errors are much more wholesome than the bed-ridden truths presented to us by others; as having their seat and fountain in the region of earnest living thought; as serving to unsettle the dull habit of mere presumption and tradition; and as ministering too, not only outward occasion, but powerful inward stimulus and help also, to the difficult business of thought in our own minds. It is in view, particularly, of this sort of value belonging to it, the power it carries with it, independently of its own conclusions right or wrong, to rouse and stimulate inquiry in others, that we consider this volume of Morell deserving of recommendation. We would be glad to know that the work is widely read and studied. Fortunately, it is of a character which is likely to confine its influence very much to those who have some power to think for themselves, and are able thus to "prove all things" for the purpose of "holding fast that which is good." For a large class even of our theological public, it can have very little sense or significance one way or another; the field it traverses is for them, in a great measure, away over the sea, and far out of sight; they only wonder that any should trouble their heads with questions and perplexities, which they find it so easy themselves entirely to overlook or forget. For such, however, as are capable of understanding it, and on this account likely to read it, the book will be found both opportune and profitable.

The following few passages may be taken as specimen extracts, suited to show something of the author's style and spirit, and well worthy besides of being looked at, and borne in mind, simply for their own aphoristic interest:

"That Germany has given rise to much that is opposed to real Christianity,, and subversive of all genuine faith in God, is, unhappily true: but it has not been at all more fruitful in schemes of Infidelity than our own country: nor has it encouraged by any means so largely as we have the grovelling spirit of a utilitarian and materialistic philosophy. The only difference is, that whilst *our* unbelievers have nurtured the spirit of Infidelity in a low, vulgar, and unimposing form, *theirs* have stormed the fortresses of the faith with an array of learning, and a mental intensity, to which we can make but small pretension. But it should not be forgotten, that, where learning can be a bane, there it can also be an antidote; and such assuredly it has been in Germany. They who are unacquainted with the literature, the criticism, and the Christian philosophy of that country, can easily afford to despise it; but I can soberly, say, that amongst all those who have taken the pains to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the best productions of the German mind, I never knew *one* (and I have known many) who did not esteem the privilege of doing so amongst the greatest he had ever enjoyed. It is common to speak particularly of the *mysticism* of the German theologians. Such an opinion, I am bold to say, is, in the great majority of instances, only accounted for on the principle, that every thing appears mystical to us before we comprehend it. But if there are any number of theologians in the world who have less than ordinary title to the charge of mysticism, that number is to be found amongst the German writers; for they, of all others, have been the most fruitful in historical research, in keen-sighted criticism, and in the development of the fixed laws of our spiritual nature."—p. 14, 15.

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 "Sure I am, that if the germs of religious Rationalism exist any where in our country,—if there are principles possessed by any party which involve in them all that the most uncompromising Rationalist could demand, those germs and those principles are to be found amongst the strenuous assertors of the doctrine of private judgment *in its intellectual acceptance*, although that doctrine may be coupled *at present* with the most perfect orthodoxy of theological opinion. It is not my intention to offer here the evidence of what I now affirm; it will be found, I trust, sufficiently expounded in various portions of the work itself, and particularly in the chapter upon *Certitude* in the domain of religious truth. I merely design by these few remarks to repel, in the outset, the charge of Rationalism, and to whisper into the ears of those most likely, perhaps, to prefer it, the admonition, to be quite sure of the soundness of *their own* principles, and to it that they do not themselves secretly foster in their own bosom the viper, which they imagine to be inserting its poison only into the heart of others."—p. 18.

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 "Putting together, therefore, the generic character of our intuitions on the one side, and the rise of more subtle philosophical

methods on the other, we see that there are sources of progressive development in both the elements out of which theology is constructed. The only idea we would impress upon the mind of every reader is, that *development* does not imply any organic *change* in the real and essential elements of Christian truth. Different as the seed in its first germination may be in all appearance from the perfect plant, yet the latter is simply the unfolding of what that seed at first implicitly contained. And so is it with the development of Christian theology in the world. In whatever degree the Christian life has been really awakened, there must have been some real perception of Divine truth; and to whatever extent logical appliances may be used, yet they cannot *alter*, but only *mould* the material which is there given. The increase of spiritual discernment, and the more subtle analysis of philosophical methods, do but tend to bring the truth into a fuller realization and a more scientific form. Under these influences it must march onward in its course until it ushers in the glorious period of the purified Church, and the promised rest of a regenerated world."—p. 201, 202.

"The exposition we have given of the nature and elements of Christian theology, offers a complete solution of the phenomena which have so often appeared in the history of Christianity, when the moral consciousness of an age gets beyond its recognized theology, so that the one can no longer satisfy the requirements of the other. The theology of an age naturally embodies itself in books, catechisms, or Church symbols, where of course it remains stereotyped and fixed; in the meantime, however, the living consciousness of the Church ever unfolds as age after age rolls on, and adds new experiences of the scope and the power of Christian truth. The inevitable result of this is, that those who take their stand *perpetinaciously* upon the formal theology of any given period, remain stationary, as it were, in the religious consciousness of this period, while that of the age itself goes so far beyond them, that their theology is no longer an adequate exponent of the religious life of the times, and can no longer satisfy its just demands. Since the time of the Reformation, the religious consciousness of Europe, unfolding the principles then started, has been advancing more and more towards the religious conception of Christianity; and in consequence of this we find the dogmatic theology of the earlier portions of this era unable to satisfy the moral and spiritual requirements of the present age. The effect of this is seen in the struggle which is manifestly taking place between those professed theologians who insist upon abiding strictly by the ideas, and even the phraseology of the past, and between the minds which represent the advancing spirit of the age, unchecked as they too often are by a due reverence for antiquity. Party struggles like these have unhappily the tendency to drive both sides for a time into the extreme position of antagonism, so that the one falls back entirely upon ancient authority, while the other thoughtlessly sets it at defiance. The only

consolation we have is, that truth always pursues its course midway between such extremes."—*p.* 223, 224.

"Whatever of life there is now in the religion of our country, we hold to be owing to causes quite distinct from the enforcement of a complete formal theology in the Confessions of our Churches. In the Church of England, true piety has developed itself far more through her prayers and such-like appeals to the deeper religious intuitions of the people, than through the enforcement either of the Catechism or the Articles. The Nonconformist Churches, it is well known, owe their vitality to the development of a purely spontaneous and experimental piety coincident with the rise and the spread of Methodism; and lastly, Scotland, which, under the rigid inculcation of a formal Calvinistic theology on the part of the Church, had sunk into that dreary state of religious lethargy, from which various circumstances have now conspired *partially* to arouse it,—Scotland, I say, with its mechanical formalism and its vast undercurrents of infidelity, will soon have to choose between the alternative of opposing a free and expansive theology to the pressing wants of the age, or relapsing deeper than ever into the moral death of a dialectical dogmatism, and all the dread results it ever brings in its train."—*p.* 249, 250.

"We find, therefore, as a matter of logical necessity, that the theory of religious certitude which throws the whole decision upon the interpretation of the letter of Scripture, insensibly merges into the very foundation-principle of Rationalism; for in one case, as in the other, the individual reason is the final appeal. And this result, be it observed, perfectly coincides with the facts of history; for nearly all the Rationalism of modern times has based itself upon biblical interpretation, and appeals even to the Scriptures themselves as a verification of its conclusions. 'Is, then, the Bible so indefinite,' it might be said, 'that we cannot arrive at any *certitude* as to what it really contains? Surely it is all very simple, and he who runs may read.' But, alas! so says the very next theorist we meet with; and so says a third; and so they say each and all. The term simplicity, as applied to truth, is very indefinite and very deceptive. Every man's system imbibed in infancy and moulded to all his habits of thought, seems to *him* the plenitude of simplicity; it is only when we have broken the spell of such habits and associations, that we begin to see what an abyss there is in ideas which we looked upon as the most elementary truths; only then that we begin to find out, that some human *system* has really moulded the Bible to our understandings, far more than the Bible has ever served as data for us to construct our system. As a moral agency, indeed, nothing can be more definite, nothing more simple than the Bible; and nothing will lead the sincere student by a shorter course to a satisfactory result; but viewed as a basis of *scientific* truth, the case is very far otherwise. Little do they consider who proclaim so loudly the doc-

trine of private judgment or private interpretation *as an intellectual principle*, what lies concealed in it *now*, and what may come forth from it hereafter. Once give the individual principle full play, and whatever be the result of a man's speculations on the Bible, you have not a word wherewith to resist him. *His* individual judgment is theoretically as good as your own, and if he be a keener logician than yourself, a thousand to one but he will beat you utterly out of the field, and set up his logical Rationalism completely over the head of your logical orthodoxy.

The conclusion, therefore, to which we come is this, that the letter of the Bible cannot be the basis of religious certitude; and that even if we did arrive at certitude through its mere verbal *interpretation*, the actual test would still be the *reason* of the interpreter."—*p.* 286, 287.

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 "The age in which we now live, an age universally fruitful in independent thinking, is fast driving the question of reason and authority as held by the Protestant world to a point. Multitudes fully conscious of the logical untenableness of their ordinary profession, have been impelled to one or the other extreme. Some, following out the principle of individualism, have seen it land them in the lowest abyss of Rationalism; while others, naturally shrinking from such a result, have thrown themselves into the arms of absolute authority. On this spectacle the Christian world is now gazing, and many is the throbbing heart which is asking, at the hands of the Protestant Church, in which its faith has been nurtured, an intelligible solution of this all-important question."—*p.* 319.

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ART. XXVII.—TYLER'S TACITUS.

The Histories of Caius Cornelius Tacitus, with notes, for colleges, by W. S. Tyler, Professor of Languages in Amherst College. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton. 1849.

PROF. Tyler happily avoids the two extremes to which annotators upon the Classics are exposed, a prolixity on one side that rides its author to death, and a brevity on the other that leaves every real difficulty unexplained, and expounds only what is already clear. His elucidations, for a writer so concise as Tacitus, are not too copious,

neither are they too sparse. An introductory essay he gives us, in the first place, abridged from the Prolegomena of L. Döderlein to his edition, on the characteristic style of Tacitus, which very much conduces to the proper understanding of his author throughout. In his own notes, he is always more suggestive than diffuse. While he neglects not the dry solutions of all grammatical difficulties, he endeavors, at the same time, by all proper information and alluring arts, to carry the reader into a lively sympathy with the author and his times. Especially is this his object in his Preliminary Remarks. In drawing a comparison, however, at the close of these, between the two great Latin historians, while he justly prefers the style of Livy, but gives, for graphic delineation of character, the palm to Tacitus, we wonder that he goes no further. We are somewhat surprised that he sets not forth the superior accuracy, diligence of research, and freedom, in a great measure, from national prejudice, exhibited in the works of Tacitus, contrasted with the great deficiency in these essential requisites of a faithful historian, which we are made to feel in the many discrepancies and Roman partialities that come before us in the writings of the earlier author.

From the greater number of editions of the *Germania* and *Agricola* of Tacitus, published of late in the United States, we would infer that these books are more read in our colleges than the *Histories*. Of these too, Prof. Tyler, some years ago, has given us, perhaps, the best edition. It is certainly very pleasing to be made acquainted with some of the peculiar traits of our respectable savage ancestors, of whom we have no reason to be ashamed, and to observe also the gentle satire of Tacitus in quietly contrasting the rude but healthful morals of the German and Britons, with the refined vices of his own countrymen; but, after all, it is in his *Histories* that the excellence of this author shines forth preëminent. It is in describing the turbulent commotions of his own times, when the mighty empire was already being tossed by those conflicting elements, which, in after times, resulted in its dissolution, himself the while no unconcerned spectator, that the strength of his tragic genius is best displayed. As no good American edition of the *Histories*, so far as we are aware, has before been published, those generally in use being very inapposite and deficient in their annotations, the present volume of Prof. Tyler, we think, supplies a desideratum. We trust it may lead to the more general and thorough study of this superior work of the old Latin historian.

W. M. N.